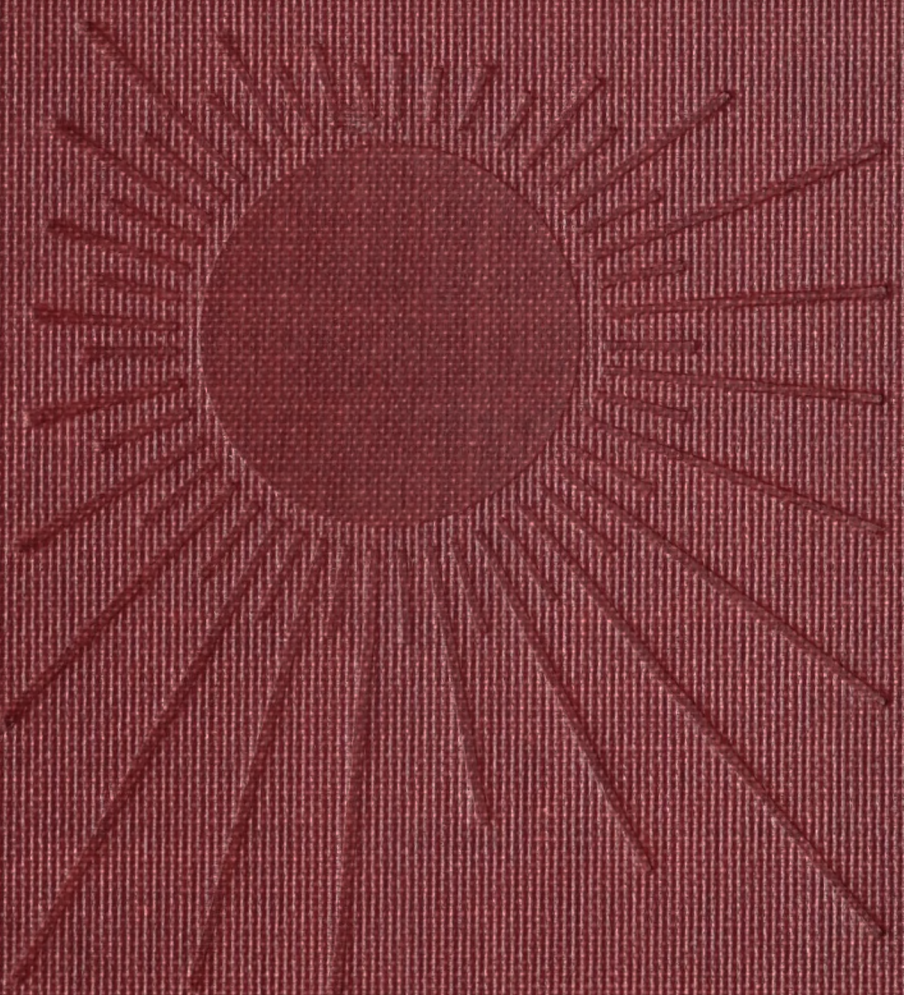
# The Wizard of the Island

F. S. Winger



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"LAWD-A-MASSY! LOOK AHT MAH PAHNS AN' EVERYTHING, A STICKIN TO DAT WALL!"

# *The Wizard of the Island*

*OR*

# *The Vindication of Prof. Waldinger*

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# PREFACE

This little book is a Pseudo-Scientific Novel, which is merely designed to be the vehicle, by means of which the author endeavors to broach a subject which he realizes full well is too big for him to handle in a thoroughly scientific manner.

The subterfuge lies in the fact that Jack Emmert's best is in reality the author's best effort, nevertheless, the author is sincere in his belief that he is fundamentally correct in his premises concern- "Matter and Motion and their relationship to the Dominant Ether of Space," even though inadequately conveyed.—F. S. W.

DEDICATED

To the memory of my brother, Oswald Emmert Winger, C. E., whose help, sympathy, and encouragement, made this publication possible.

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# CHAPTER I.

## The Aviator's Return.

"Huxtry, huxtry; just out poipers." "Enquirer, sir?" "All about the Lost Aviator's Return. Buy a poiper, gents."

The above din assaulted the ears of pedestrians and theatergoers at about eleven o'clock the night of November First, Two Thousand and Fifteen. The streets were full of surging humanity; the pedestrian element having been materially augmented by the outpourings from the adjacent theaters.

So sudden was the onslaught of these paper vendors, that amidst the confusion of sounds incident to the selling of their "wares," it was some moments before the public at large really grasped the full significance of the situation; then, in their turn, the newsboys were fairly besieged by eager outstretched hands.

Not in many years had the papers con-

tained an item of more universal interest; the disappearance of the air-ship "America" under such mystifying circumstances was still fresh in the minds of practically everybody.

Having acquired their prize morsel of news, some in their eagerness sought a near-by lighted window, while others crammed their paper into overcoat pocket and rushed eagerly on, pending a more convenient reading.

The following is a transcript from the news item which had caused all of this excitement:

*"Jack Emmert and Party Safe Home Again! The Mystery Explained!"*

"Jack Emmert and party are once more safe and sound on American soil! Our readers will remember the intense excitement which prevailed at the mysterious disappearance of Jack Emmert and his 'America' on the occasion of the International Aviation Event last July Fourth.

"Our editor has just finished talking with Mr. Emmert over the radioscope, and while the celebrated aviator refused to give any detailed information at this

time, he has nevertheless kindly consented to give an account of his experiences before the American Society of Scientific Research tomorrow evening at eight o'clock. A cordial invitation is extended to the public by the society, and their hall, immense as it is, will doubtless be tested to its utmost capacity.

"The radioscope bulletins of the 'Enquirer' and other American papers will have to suffice for those who may be so unfortunate as not to be able to gain admittance; in any event, they at least can *see* what he says as he talks.

"The principal cities of the entire world will doubtless be on the qui vive, and in attune with the radio apparatus of the American Society of Scientific Research tomorrow night.

"Mr. Jack Emmert and party are even now en route from San Diego via airship, but he requests as an especial favor, that no demonstration be made upon his arrival in Chicago, as he wishes to conserve his strength so as to give the public his best effort on the morrow."

The following day there was but one topic—Jack Emmert's return. Busi-

ness was at a standstill; the very atmosphere was surcharged with expectancy!

* * * * * * * *

The evening of November the Second found every available seat occupied, and thousands had to be content with the radioscope bulletins as was suggested by the "Chicago Enquirer."

The buzz of expectancy which prevailed throughout the vast hall having subsided to a profound stillness, Professor Robert Townsend, presiding officer, prefaced his introductory speech as follows:

"Ladies and gentlemen—I have two distinct announcements to make, one of which will be received by our membership with sorrow! I regret to announce the deaths of our beloved members, Professors Turner and Waldinger, whom it will be remembered (at least by the scientific world) were the principals in a debate before this society, in this very room, just ten years ago tonight.

"On that occasion, there was a very regrettable difference in expressed opinion concerning inter-atomic phenomena on the part of these two stalwart champions

of their respective theories; the verdict having been given in favor of the hypothesis of Professor Turner, many of you will recall, so incensed Professor Waldinger, that he left the meeting in terrific anger, refusing to become reconciled with his opponent Turner, and vowing that he would yet demonstrate the absolute correctness of his theories. A week later, both he and his ten-year-old daughter, Bessie, apparently vanished from the face of the earth.

"Professor Turner remained with the society, contributing in many ways towards its scientific researches, and it was on such an errand that he accepted passage on board the 'America,' but, friends, he has not returned with the aviation party; but, as his death, as well as that of Professor Waldinger, is bound up in the narrative of the speaker of the evening, I will desist, and it is with unusual pleasure that I call upon the hero of the hour, Mr. Jack Emmert, erstwhile lost aviator, who will now speak to us."

Jack Emmert unfolded his six-foot of length in response to this kindly introduc-

tion, and stood calmly before that mammoth assemblage.

His was indeed an interesting personality—staunch, self-reliant, and withal modest in bearing—a clear, steady eye which fully comprehends what it sees, but as he is about to speak to us, we will refrain from further description, for, as he speaks, we will learn to know him better.

After the thunderous applause which had greeted his introduction had subsided, Mr. Jack Emmert regaled our ears with the following amazing story:

## CHAPTER II.

### The Mysterious Deflection.

You will please pardon my reference to events prior to the vanishing of the good old air-ship "America," but there may be those among your number to whom a slight refreshing of the memory will not come amiss.

Last July Fourth I was signally honored with a place in the International Aviation Race, and it was my peculiar privilege to defend the aerial prestige of our own dear land in its namesake, the "America."

While the pennant went to France, I most assuredly believe that the "America" would have won the race easily, had it not been for the untoward events which beset us almost at the very outset, and of which I will make more detailed mention later on.

The "America" was indeed a beautiful and air-worthy craft—the peer of any, and superior to many. She was of the most approved tractor type, with ample engine capacity and an abundance of reserve force; her spread of wing was fully three hundred and fifty feet, and approximately this same distance from propeller to stern.

The pilot house had the usual forward position, but the most distinctive feature about her, was her counterbalancing platform device, triangular in shape; the apex of the triangle being near the rudder or back portion of the airship, and the base of the triangle coincident with the pilot house; a line drawn through the hub of the propeller forward to the apex of the triangle, would divide this platform into two equal or similar triangles, each being symmetrical with the remainder of the airship.

This horizontal plane, or triangular platform, was very delicately balanced; being so constructed that any weight imposed upon it either to the right or left of its center of symmetry, would, because of a slight rotating tendency, cause vanes

extending laterally, to present a greater or less angle to the direction of flight, and thereby offset the temporarily disturbed equilibrium, with the result that a uniformly horizontal position of platform was maintained automatically, which made it possible for the passengers to move about at their pleasure without seriously hindering the progress of the airship.

Back of the pilot house was another enclosure in which was installed the radioscope apparatus. The entire platform was enclosed with hermetically sealed glass, which was necessary because of the extremely high speed for which she was built.

I do not wish to importune you with further technicalities, but deemed it best to give you this brief description, so that you may feel more "at home" on board the "America."

As the presiding officer has already intimated, it was my very good fortune to have been favored by the presence of the late Professor Turner, and while you have lost in him a fellow member, you

must remember that I am bereft of a very intimate friend and companion.

Professor Turner, Radio Engineer George Kepner, Mechanician Fred Brown, my "kid" brother Willie, Ebony, the cook (Eb for short), and Master Willie's dog, "Radio," comprised the personnel, and I might add, all of whom (save the late Professor Turner, of course) are in this audience tonight—even to the dog "Radio."

(Radio, at the first mention of his name, had pricked up his ears in close attention, but at its second mentioning, came bounding forward towards the platform, barking uproariously in utter disregard for the conventions of the occasion, but was quietly and firmly suppressed by several of the more alert ushers, very much to his dogship's chagrin. The but half suppressed titter which went in a wave about the hall because of this diversion having subsided, Mr. Jack Emmert continued.)

We were making fine progress until shortly after having left the first International Float, but from that time on, our troubles began.

A passing word about these floats would be apropos at this time, as they had just been instituted (an American invention) by joint contributions, and joint maintenance, on the part of all of the principal countries of the world, and without which, a trip across the Pacific ocean to Yokohama could not have been seriously contemplated.

They were three in number, and their decks were perfectly devoid of obstructions of all kinds, so as to facilitate the safe landing of air-craft (their sole purpose). The major portions of these floats were normally submerged so as to present as little wind resistance as possible. The entire mechanism and crew were below the water line, and in the event of extremely severe storms, it was possible to submerge them completely, save a periscope extension which was ever and always on the lookout.

Their sole duty, as before stated, was to maintain as nearly as possible a constant latitude and longitude. Float number one had its location arbitrarily fixed at thirty-five degrees north latitude,

and longitude one hundred sixty, west from Greenwich.

Shortly after having left float number one, our speed indicator told us that we were bowling along at the rate of three hundred and fifty and three-tenths miles per hour, when Kepner emerged from the aisleway connecting the radioscope room and the pilot house, saying that San Francisco was endeavoring to communicate with us.

I found that the radioscope bulletin was asking, "How goes it with the 'America?' We have not heard from you for about an hour."

Our sending apparatus was put into commission by the adjustment of several levers and Kepner replied, "Everything O. K.—we are averaging over three hundred and fifty miles per hour; how does this speed compare with that of our friends, 'the competitors?' "

"Your speed exceeds that of your nearest rival by fully ten miles per hour," was the reply flashed on the bulletin.

"Hurrah for the 'America,' " shouted Willie. "Fine," ejaculated the Professor. Kepner was too busy to express his

sentiments, while Eb's dusky face fairly exuded his delight—even Radio barked his approval of the good news.

Just then Brown called me to the pilot house and complained that he was having difficulty in maintaining the prescribed course. "Something has gone wrong with the steering device; you take the wheel while I look her over."

While Brown was gone I experienced the same difficulties he had complained of, and found that the "America" could only be kept in her due westerly course with ever-increasing difficulty, there being a persistent southerly trend.

Brown returned in several minutes, having failed to discover the trouble, and I relinquished the wheel to him again, whereat he turned to me in wide-eyed astonishment! "It's getting worse and worse all the time; the southerly trend is stronger now than when I first called you!"

I summoned the others to the pilot house and imparted this dubious news. "Have you gone over the mechanism thoroughly?" inquired the Professor, and

on receiving my affirmative answer, was nonplussed!

"Maybe we have struck one of those 'holes in the air,'" ventured Willie, to which suggestion there was vouchsafed no reply, and Willie turned to Radio for consolation, and received a wag of the tail in sympathy.

I took the wheel again, and found that Brown's statement was only too true, and we resolved to report this to San Francisco at once. All hands (save Brown) returned to the radioscope and we were surprised to see only a faint signal thereon, though still legible. It was saying, "Let us hear from you again." Kepner replied to this, "We are having difficulty with our steering device, and besides we can scarcely read your signals."

San Francisco replied to this, "Your signals also are very faint; suggest that you inspect your sending apparatus." Kepner flashed back, "Everything in first class working order, apparently, as far as mechanism is concerned." San Francisco's reply to this was absolutely illegible, and we sent back, "Can't read

you at all now; troubles are piling up thick and fast, and we are decidedly out of our prescribed course; fear we will be compelled to abandon the race." The reply to this (if any) did not appear on the bulletin.

Kepner anxiously tested out his radio apparatus and turned to us with a very puzzled expression, "There is absolutely nothing wrong with the workings of the apparatus that I can discover; I for one am completely 'stumped.'"

"Look! The bulletin!" exclaimed the Professor at this juncture, and we were surprised to see faintly thereon, a message signed, Hawaiian Islands. The message read, "San Francisco is asking us to communicate with you; can you read us?" Kepner instantly replied, "We lost San Francisco some time ago; tell them that some strange force seems to—" and just then, "bang" went the lever, and we could neither send nor receive.

Consternation prevailed aboard the "America;" we were oppressed with an utter sense of helplessness; Kepner was simply dumfounded, and refused to

abandon his efforts towards further communication, but without avail!

A new complication had now arisen, in that a terrific wind and electrical storm had sprung up, and it was with difficulty that we were able to shout our conversation; dense clouds completely encompassed us, and the wind fairly shrieked through the suspending rods of the "America."

We induced Kepner to leave his apparatus for a time, and the pilot house became a place of council. Willie and Eb were almost terror stricken, and had sought refuge in the farthest corner of the radioscope room.

Brown, having been under dire stress for some hours, we all took turns at the wheel; all attempts to overcome the mysterious southerly trend having been abandoned at the approach of the storm. The exchanges of thunderbolts between banks of clouds became very violent at times, and we began to fear for the ultimate safety of the "America" and her passengers.

It was now about the time we should have reached the second float and obtain

supplies had we not been so mysteriously diverted from our course, and it was with many misgivings that Brown sounded the gasoline tank. "We have just four inches of gasoline left!" exclaimed Brown and it was with blanched faces that we received this information, as we all knew that four inches was barely sufficient to last us two hours more at most. We should have had at least ten inches remaining at this time, as this was the usual reserve figured on.

We decided at once to inflate the emergency canvas boat strapped beneath the platform, so that if it came to the worst, we could trust ourselves to the mercies of the ocean, rather than the less stable air, as we could there at least drift aimlessly, while, without motive power, the air would refuse to sustain us.

Brown set the air pumps a-going, and the progress of the "America" was thereafter materially lessened on account of this divertment of power to the pumps.

We had not as yet taken Willie and Eb into our confidence as to the real gravity of the situation, having deemed it best to allow them to remain in ignorance

for the time being, as nothing could be gained by telling them of our fears at this time.

Another sounding of the tank was made, and there remained but two and one-half inches of gasoline; but we noted with satisfaction that the canvas boat suspended beneath the platform was nearly inflated to its fullest extent. We determined therefore to cast our lot with that of the sea within the hour, and there were many things to be done before finally casting off.

The Professor busied himself in securing our location, which after checking the second time, he carefully jotted down in his note-book, as follows: South latitude five degrees; west longitude one hundred and sixty-five degrees, which meant that the course of the "America" had been so diverted that we had traversed forty degrees of latitude, while our westward or longitudinal progress had been only five degrees, since having left float number one.

Kepner and Eb were commissioned to see to the transfer of provisions, water, utensils, rifles, automatics, ammunition,

fishing tackle, etc., of which we had fortunately an abundant store. Willie saw to wearing apparel, bedding, etc., while Brown and I gave our undivided attention to the steering of the airship itself.

The fury of the storm had abated considerably, but being practically without gasoline, we knew that the time to break away had at last arrived. The parachute arrangement provided for just such an emergency as this, having been found in perfect condition, the Professor called out, "Everybody here?" and all being accounted for, Brown pulled the lever which automatically dissevered the canvas life-boat from the airship.

The "America" seemed to rise swiftly above, but we knew that in reality we were falling rapidly. Would the parachute work? would it ever unfold? but, unfold it did, and without any appreciable shock to the occupants of the boat.

The "America" was hidden from our sight by the close proximity of the huge canopy of the parachute, and doubtless was plodding along as before, as Brown had taken the precaution to lash the wheel before leaving.

We were now probably about one thousand feet above the ocean, and we eagerly scanned the horizon for some evidences of possible succor, but a blank wall of sea encountered our gaze everywhere; we finally descended gently to the sea below; the only trouble we had of any consequence was to avoid becoming enmeshed with the parachute. However, we succeeded in clearing ourselves from its entrammeling embrace.

It was five o'clock in the afternoon.

## CHAPTER III.

### Steam Mountain Island.

The sea was still running high, and our canvas boat was tossed about like a plaything, but it was fortunate for us that the wind had lost a measure of its fury; now and again we were dangerously near getting into the trough of the sea, and it was only with the greatest difficulty that we managed to keep her headed towards the wind. We were drifting aimlessly, and were acting merely on the defensive. Darkness was approaching rapidly. Willie and Eb were fast asleep; with Brown on the watch, the Professor, Kepner and myself discussed the situation in low tones till far into the night.

Morning dawned bright and clear; the rough handling which we had received at the hands of the elements but a few short hours previously, seemed very unreal in the light of the calm aspect of the sea.

There was a very gentle breeze blowing, however, and the sun was just rising from the sea like a huge ball of fire. We installed our little mast and sail, which until now had been allowed to remain in the bottom of the boat, and our little barque responded nobly to the breeze, and we pointed her in a southwesterly direction, as we had decided during our night's vigil that we probably were nearer the shores of Australia than that of any other land.

Eb busied himself with the preparation of our frugal breakfast—frugal because of precaution rather than from present necessity, as we did not know for what length of time we might be compelled to exist under these or very similar conditions. How thankful we were that we had plenty to eat and drink, and we fully realized that our lot was not nearly so bad as it might have been. Someone was always on the watch for a glimpse of a sail or other evidence of possible succor.

Willie was the life of the party and had us laughing at his inconsequential remarks and antics much of the time; so, in spite of our gloomy prospects, the

party was not entirely devoid of good cheer.

We were forced to conclude that we were far from the highways of the sea, as we had not caught even a passing glimpse of a sail or funnel on the wide expanse of the horizon. We had experienced nothing like real hardship as yet, and the canvas boat was making very fair progress in spite of having been handicapped with such a diminutive mast and sail.

Towards the middle of the afternoon we met with our first accident. Willie and Radio had been frolicking about in a rather reckless manner, Eb constituting an appreciative audience of one, when he uttered a terrified yell, exclaiming, "Marsa Jack, Radio am done fall oberbowd." There wasn't a person on board who would not have risked a great deal for Radio, for we had all become very much attached to him, but Brown's quick action got the best of us; having divested himself of his coat, shoes and hat with lightning-like rapidity, he plunged overboard, heedless of any sharks which might have been lurking about. As soon as we had seen Brown's purpose, we hastily

lowered the sail and brought the boat about. By this time Radio was some fifty or seventy-yards in the wake of the boat; Brown occasionally called out encouragingly to Radio, and we soon had him safe and sound on board again. If ever a dog wagged his thanks, Radio was that dog; and though perfectly innocent of any offense, there was a scattering among his sympathizers as he shook the salt water from his shaggy coat.

Willie explained that one of Radio's pet diversions had been to leap from side to side of the boat, and that this time when Radio had jumped, he had "slid off," the canvas side of the boat failing as a support as it was wont to do.

The overboard episode paled into insignificance as we learned of this, as it indicated that the canvas boat was losing some of its original buoyancy. "There must be a slow leak somewhere," ventured Willie, and even though this was a somewhat self-evident remark, we acted on the suggestion and made a very thorough search, but without avail; the flabbiness of that side of the boat persistently defied all of our attempts towards a remedy, and

as the boat began to list to one side we knew that it behooved us to reach some land at the earliest possible moment; so, thereafter we gave our almost undivided attention to availing ourselves of every stitch of our small sail, and to maintain two lookouts continuously, instead of one.

At about four-thirty in the afternoon, the wind began to show signs of freshening, and we were sailing along famously; but to what destination?—that was the all-absorbing question; time only would decide this. The lack of buoyancy of our boat had become quite apparent, and the outcome would surely be disastrous did we not soon discover land of some description.

Suddenly, Brown called, "What do you make that out to be, Jack?" at the same time pointing in a direction almost identical with the course of the boat. All eyes were eagerly turned in the direction indicated, and there, we dimly saw what appeared to be a huge cloud rising vertically from out the sea! It might have been thirty, or even fifty miles distant; we could not determine which, for we had

nothing in the foreground to base a perspective upon; however, as we progressed the cloud column became more clearly defined, and finally Brown, who had been gazing very intently through a pair of powerful binoculars, exclaimed, "Land! I see land! The cloud column seems to be resting upon it!" The glasses were passed from hand to hand, and it was Willie's sharp eyes and lively imagination which discovered that the seeming cloud was in reality a column of hot steam emanating from a volcanic mountain!

Willie was just in the act of passing the glasses to Kepner for verification, when we were all pitched violently forward into the bottom of the boat—so intent had we been in watching the strange phenomenon of the steam column, that a storm had stolen upon us unawares. The boom swung violently around, barely missing our heads, and for a brief moment we thought that the mast and all would go overboard. Brown's resourcefulness again came to the rescue, and we soon had her under control, but were being driven "dead ahead" towards the

newly discovered land at a tremendous rate.

It was all we could do to keep from being carried overboard by the huge masses of spray which at times completely enveloped us. Brown, with the assistance of Kepner and the Professor, had managed to take in the sail; conversation was out of the question, our voices being completely drowned by the shrieking of the wind.

Our little barque was scudding before the storm, but nearer, ever nearer, the land!

Soon we discovered breakers ahead, and it was with fear and trembling that we awaited our fate; nothing could be done which had not already been done, and we were as mere puppets in the hands of fate. A huge wave larger than the rest, gripped us in a last supreme effort to overwhelm us, and we rose high on its crest—would we descend with it on the reefs, or beyond them?—the suspense was agonizing, and to our terrorized imaginations it seemed that we would never descend again! It was like a sculptured billow, but descend we did and safe-

ly on the farther side of the perilous reefs. The frenzied rage of the waters as they lashed themselves in impotent fury at our escape, sounded like music in our ears, as the greater their disappointment, the greater our sense of security.

The waters of the lagoon were calm only by way of comparison—they were still running mountain high, and the booming of the billows as they reached the shore could be distinctly heard above the now diminishing din of the breakers just passed. This booming soon developed into what seemed to be a sullen continuous roar, becoming louder and louder each moment—then we were gripped by a swift moving billow which scudded us high up on what in the semi-darkness appeared to be a comparatively smooth beach. Drenched to the skin, and thoroughly weary, almost to the point of exhaustion, we succeeded in dragging ourselves and the boat out of the reach of the hungry waters, and found a few moments' respite before taking any particular note of our immediate surroundings.

We held a brief consultation and decided to bivouac for the night. Sleep

was out of the question for most of the party, and a more miserable lot of castaways would have been hard to imagine. The night, though almost interminably long, finally gave way to the insistence of the light. All eyes, as with one accord, were turned in the direction of the volcanic mountain with its mysterious canopy of steam which ascended higher, and ever higher, until lost in the zenith!

## CHAPTER IV.

### Shale Rock Cavern.

The volcanic peak we judged to be from ten to twelve miles distant, and fully ten thousand feet in height. The steam column was probably about two miles in diameter at its base, but widened out as it ascended, but its density did not diminish in anything like inverse proportion.

"What an astonishing freak of nature," was Professor Turner's comment. "I never heard of such a phenomenon before, and doubtless we are the discoverers of what may yet prove to be an astounding bit of news for the scientific world." This was certainly taking a lot for granted; how could we in our deplorable condition even hope to be the bearers of news to civilization? However, we could ill afford to spend our time in this manner, as we had some very practical and real-

istic problems to solve—to pass another night after this fashion was altogether out of the question, so after partaking sparingly of our cold and drenched provisions, we divided our efforts—Brown and Eb set out to find some drift-wood for a much needed fire; Kepner and Willie wandered down the gravel beach in search of shell fish, while the Professor and I went in quest of a suitable place for the coming night's shelter.

Paralleling the beach at this point, and probably about half a mile distant, rose a precipitous mountain chain, rearing itself higher to our right until it merged into the steam mountain. Between the shore and the base of this mountain chain, or the half mile mentioned, there was a comparatively level tract, absolutely guiltless of any manner of vegetation whatever; as far as we could judge there was not even a blade of grass to be seen on this inhospitable shore; even the crest of the mountain chain bore not a vestige or a sign of trees or shrubs; all was desolate and bleak beyond the imagination even.

As the Professor and I proceeded, the

elevation increased very slightly, and the rocky abandon became more and more manifest. Huge shales of rock lay tumbled fantastically about, being only partially imbedded in the fine shale debris and sand. This fact together with their almost universal flatness, and diversified angles, formed many a nook and cranny, almost any of which would have made a very passable shelter from both wind and rain.

Winding our way in and out among these, we finally selected a sort of cavern formed by the junction of two of these huge lean-to slabs situated at the base of a high cliff. These immense shales of rock were edgewise to the cliff, the one leaning at an angle of about thirty degrees, and the other at approximately sixty degrees; their tops were crunched together some fifteen feet above. The third side was blocked by the cliff itself, while the floor or bottom consisted of fine white sand into which the sides or lean-to slabs were imbedded, we knew not how deep. With just a little effort and material ready at hand, we saw that we could easily close that side facing the sea

as well. "Shale Rock Cavern" we judged to be about fifty feet above the sea level.

The Professor and I returned to camp, and were gratified to see that Brown and Eb had been successful in their search for drift-wood, as was evidenced by a glowing fire they had built between two handy boulders, and best of all, the savory odor of a stew of some kind saluted our nostrils. We found that Kepner and Willie had established themselves as excellent providers, in that they had returned laden down with several varieties of shell fish, and glowing reports of practically inexhaustible supplies of these as well as other varieties available for our future use.

All in all our several successes had put us in a much better frame of mind, and in any event we were soon partaking of Eb's concoction with great avidity.

"What I would like to know," said Kepner, "is whether this beach is a portion of some main-land or that of an island." The Professor gravely replied to this that of course that thought was uppermost in the minds of us all, but that it was impossible to determine at present, owing to the barrier in front of us, and

furthermore, it was doubtful if we could determine this much mooted question from the crest of the range, since even then "Steam Mountain" would block our view.

"I just hope it is an island," said Willie, whose mind was still fresh with the details of adventure stories he had read.

"We have sufficient time left, I believe, to scale the mountain ridge, and I propose that we make the ascent at once and as we pass in that direction we will show you the result of our excursion, and we hope that you will be pleased with your prospective domicile," said the Professor.

While preparations were being made for the proposed trip, Radio, intuitively scenting an adventure, was romping about, partly in anticipation, and wholly in ecstasy.

Eb did not seem particularly enthusiastic about the prospective climbing of "Blue Ridge," so we left him behind to watch our effects. No evidences of human visitation to this inhospitable looking land had been seen, but this fact would scarcely be considered sufficient indication that such was not the case, as we had explored

nothing beyond a radius of a mile or so from the point where our boat was cast upon the shore.

Willie and Radio were already far ahead of us, and were working off a little of their surplus energy in playing hide and seek among the boulders—an ideal spot for such a diversion.

All were amazed at the marvelous intricacy through which we were wending our way, now and again we had to climb over a huge prostrate slab, and then again through narrow avenues which would terminate as abruptly as they started—a veritable labyrinth in fact. The characteristic thing, however, was the almost universal levelness of the soil consisting of fine shale debris and a liberal mixture of clear white sand, out of which projected these slabs of rock; it was like a huge dilapidated, long-forgotten graveyard, marking the burying place of some gigantic race.

"Shale Rock Cavern" was now immediately ahead of us, and the Professor and I were immensely pleased to note the enthusiastic reception given our discovery; Kepner, in particular, became very volu-

minous in its praise. Brown's practical eye and constructive trend of mind saw at a glance what a commodious and secure retreat this would prove to be, and declared then and there his intention to remain and fix it up suitable for occupancy. "Between Eb and myself we will have the place quite home like by the time you will have returned this evening."

We knew from past experience that it was useless to try to dissuade him from a fixed purpose, so shouldering our few effects in the shape of guns, water canteens, several coils of rope, etc., we began our ascent of "Blue Ridge."

We did not encounter much difficulty in selecting a place for our footing, but whether the place so selected was secure or not, was another question. The rock, slightly oily and slaty in nature, would crumble on the slightest provocation; but there was running through it, at random, streaks of harder strata, and we soon became quite adept in choosing our footing.

The eminence was not sheer by any means, but averaged at least sixty degrees. We were fully an hour and a half

in making the climb, but rested on several occasions on some convenient ledge. We gained the summit, however, and oh! what a relief to catch even a distant glimpse of some living growing thing! Directly ahead of us, at about a quarter of a mile distance, trees and shrubbery were much in evidence, but all along the crest proper for this approximate quarter of a mile, it had the same baldness characteristic of its sides and bottom.

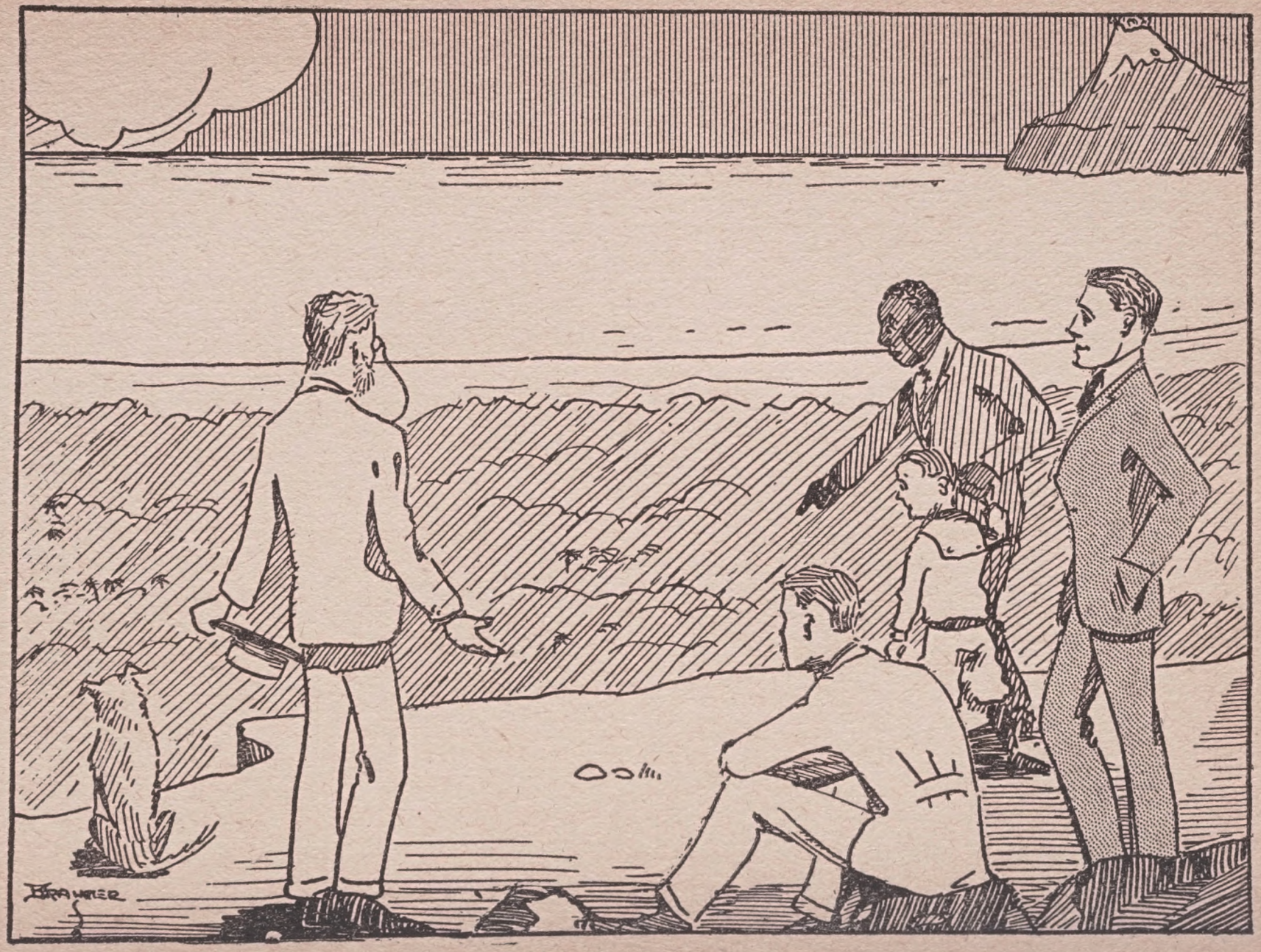
To our right, the mountain ridge sloped more or less gently upward until it blended into the snow-capped sides of "Steam Mountain," miles distant. The trees immediately in the foreground made it impossible for the vision to extend any great distance.

We directed our course straight ahead, as this seemed to hold the greatest promise, and so wended our way down a little gully for another quarter of a mile. A dense growth of underbrush almost debarred our way at times, but we persisted till suddenly, almost magically, we were in the open again!

I cannot begin to do justice to the marvelous beauty of the scene which so sud-

denly broke upon us! We were upon a sort of plateau, only an acre or so in extent, fairly matted with a luxuriant growth of grass. It seemed that the whole thing had been staged for our especial benefit; we moved forward to the very edge of the little plateau and gazed down a sheer drop of at least eight hundred feet. The face of this precipice was really not sheer—it was more than that! The top edge where we were standing projected beyond the base of the cliff very remarkably.

Our view was unobstructed, and we could see for miles in all directions (save for the ridge at our backs). We seemed to be standing on a sort of pulpit or gigantic step which was thrust from the side of a huge amphitheatre. Straight in front of us was the eight hundred foot abyss, and beyond and still further down than the base of the cliff, the land sloped gradually until it blended into the sea. Concavity was the dominant feature—the shore line in front of us, but in the far distance, was concave; the great area between this shore and "Blue Ridge" was concave, broken only at the point where



HIGH ROCK

we were standing. The area between our present position and "Steam Mountain" was concave.

We had a much better view of "Steam Mountain" than at any time previously. To the extreme left, the land gradually diminished in elevation until it apparently thinned out into a marshy tract practically at sea level, but miles distant.

We could not yet determine whether this land was that of an island, as "Steam Mountain" obstructed our view in that direction. Taking more particular note of our immediate surroundings, we discovered that there was a large pool of water at the base of "High Rock" and as the water problem was still unsolved, we retraced our steps to where this small plateau joined the general slope of "Blue Ridge," and descended its slope along the side of "High Rock" to the water at its base. It was fairly gushing from beneath the cliff, almost like the emerging of a subterranean stream. We found it clear, cool and refreshing, so there passed from the realm of doubt the problem of fresh water.

Each of the party having filled his can-

teen, we then started back towards camp. While we were repassing through the gully or diminutive ravine connecting the crest of "Blue Ridge" with "High Rock" Kepner and Willie had each been successful in bagging a couple of quail which had startled us as they whirred from their bushy retreats. These birds were the very first evidence of animated life we had seen since having left camp that morning, save of course, the lazy, lofty, soaring and gyrating of an occasional eagle or vulture in the far distance.

The descent of the sea side of "Blue Ridge" was made without any mishap, and in much less time than it had taken to climb it, so that we arrived in camp on schedule time.

Brown had successfully closed that side of "Shale Rock Cavern" which faced the sea, except a comparatively small opening, just sufficient to give us an easy entrance. Eb had brought everything from "Refuge Beach," save the canvas boat, not even forgetting the parachute envelope.

At the sight of the quail held temptingly aloft by Kepner and Willie, Eb

went into ecstasies of delight, and hustled about to add them to our menu.

A roaring fire was a-going within "Shale Rock Cavern;" a slight natural depression or crevasse in the cliff side made an ideal fireplace; a smaller and narrower vertical extension of this same rift or crevasse, also made a good egress for the smoke, and produced a splendid draft.

The evenings were inclined to be a little chilly, and we formed a picturesque group within "Shale Rock Cavern" as we partook of the appetizing meal prepared by our faithful Eb.

Now that we have them all together, and in repose for the time being, a more intimate acquaintance will not come amiss. Professor Turner was of course the senior member of the party—about forty-eight years of age, tall and lean, very grave and dignified in bearing—and he had a right to be, as there were few men better known to the scientific world, or to whom was accorded the recognition of signal achievement in physical research than he. We all learned to love and re-

spect him, despite his rather austere manners.

Kepner was a young man probably about twenty-four years of age, a free lance, keen and alert at all times, very handsome, even to a degree beyond the average; a young man who would be a great success with the ladies, but, alas! our party was devoid of such. He was a graduate of Cornell University, having also taken a post-graduate course in that institution, as well as special courses in several technical schools of repute. An intelligent, well balanced young man, and a valuable asset to our party.

Brown—well, B r o w n was simply Brown, that is all—an average man of mechanical turn of mind, with nothing to distinguish him save his extreme taciturnity. He seldom made a verbal reply when a nod or shake of his head would suffice, and was never known to volunteer a merely casual remark; it had to be something really worth while to elicit a voluntary comment from him. We had dubbed him the silent mechanician.

My brother Willie was about sixteen years old—full of life and action, inces-

santly on the move, just brimming over with good fellowship towards all; an apt student for his years, but a little prone to form premature conclusions, and in this he was a natural foil to the mature wisdom of Professor Turner.

Eb (short for Ebony), our negro cook and man of all work, was a short, stocky individual with long arms, huge hands, and an immense girth of chest—strong far beyond his own knowledge of the fact. Eb was as black as the proverbial "ace of spades," but for all that, he was not a colored man; for, you see, he was born that way.

He was good nature personified, and when particularly well pleased, would display a row of ivories to be envied. He was loyalty itself, and his devotion to the rest of the party was a valuable asset indeed. We generally took him into our discussions and consultations concerning the general welfare of the party, and not a man among us was even inclined to discriminate against him on account of his color. Eb in his turn did not presume upon this fact, which went to prove that he was possessed of some considerable de-

gree of wisdom along with his many other creditable traits.

We were gathered about the fire, save Willie and Radio, who were romping about rather boisterously for our somewhat limited quarters, when suddenly we were startled by a rattle and a crash; we turned almost with one accord to see what Willie and Radio had been up to, whereat Willie rather ungrammatically called out, "We ain't done nothin,' have we, Radio?" "Lawd a-Massy! look aht mah pahns an' everything, a-stickin to dat wall!" Eb's eyes were fairly bulging out with terror, and sure enough, right up against the side of our cavern at a height of six feet or more above the sand floor, we saw our small assortment of kitchen utensils just as though hung there! I felt a steady tug at my trousers pocket, and turned to my neighbor inquiringly, but he was guiltless! I crammed my hand into my pocket and pulled forth my knife and a bunch of keys, when they were wrenched from my grasp and roughly catapulted over to the wall, and took a place among the flighty utensils!

Professor Turner approached the wall

and seized hold of the handle of the frying pan, and to his utter astonishment as well as the rest of us, he could not wrench it loose! I approached rather gingerly, I must confess, and recovered my knife and keys, but with some little effort, but was glad to surrender them again, as they would not stay "put."

The Professor at this juncture tied a string to one of the smaller utensils, a fork, if I remember correctly, and then grasping hold of the other end of the string he pulled gently, firmly and observantly. The fork parted from the wall with seeming reluctance, but when free, it did not fall to the ground, but rather remained in the air, straining at the string; the Professor then walked from one end of the cavern to the other, followed by the rest of us, all agape. Then, he approached the entrance to the cavern, passed out into the brilliant moonlight; the fork was still acting in the same unaccountable manner; it seemed to be accompanying him as he walked; then, as he purposely changed his direction, it seemed to be leading him. "Don't yo' go, Marsa Turnah, doan yo' go! De

Debbil himself am sho a-leadin' yo, Marsa. Please doan yo' go!"

We were all closely following the Professor, mystified beyond measure; poor old Eb's teeth were fairly chattering, and it wasn't because of the cold either.

The Professor, having stopped, firmly brought the hand holding the string up to the height of his eye and sighted over it—it pointed directly towards the very top of "Steam Mountain!"

The Professor exclaimed at this moment, "Watch!" then he let go of his end of the string and there happened—only this—the fork and string had disappeared into the darkness without a sound!

## CHAPTER V.

### The Circumnavigation of the Island.

We re-entered "Shale Rock Cavern" too mystified to speak! blank astonishment was depicted on every countenance —an astonishment which approximated consternation, in fact. The Professor was about to speak, when, with a clatter, our precious utensils dropped to the floor! Eb approached his culinary articles cautiously, but found that they were amenable to ordinary handling, as was their wont to do, but it was with many mumblings and sundry grunts of disapproval that he finally reclaimed them to the last one.

"Steam Mountain," said the Professor with visible agitation, "the 'Steam Mountain' is the culprit! But why this periodical attraction towards metals? Can it be that there is a mass of molten metal within yonder peak which has the proper-

ties of the old-time loadstone? But even so, why does it not exercise at least a slight influence now although its mass may have retreated far within the very bowels of the earth?"

Needless to say, none of us had the temerity to attempt an answer, and it was equally evident that the Professor did not expect any reply. Thoroughly mystified we turned in for the night, and soon all were in the land of dreams. I remember of having dreampt that I was being keel-hauled with endless gyrations through the infinite space by a force emanating from nowhere in particular, and landing me just as definitely.

On the morrow, as with one accord, we gazed long and earnestly at "Steam Mountain" as though she might by some responsive mood deign to reveal a mite of her secret, but her appearance, though a very unusual sight at best, was now quite normal. We continued to gaze for some time but without avail. The steam column still majestically vaulted itself into the very heavens; the bleak, snow-capped sides had the same cold, forbidding aspect. We re-entered the cavern, and Eb ap-

proached his kitchen utensils cautiously, and to us in a manner which seemed ludicrous in the extreme. The Professor did not join us in our small talk, but remained aloof in an abstracted frame of mind for hours.

Kepner and Willie had scaled the "Blue Ridge," taking their guns and a supply of ammunition with them, promising to return by nightfall with some game if possible. Later on in the day the Professor, Brown and I discussed the problem of our future, and came to the conclusion that the most feasible thing to do at this time was to get our canvas boat into shape for a voyage of exploration down the shore in the direction of "Steam Mountain," whose attraction had now become psychological as well as physical.

The canvas boat was quite flat by this time, and the problem of its inflation was a serious one, as we had but an ordinary bicycle pump with which to do this, and we knew that it would be a slow and tedious job, as we had discovered while still afloat on the ocean after having abandoned the "America." However, knowing that there was really nothing else to

do, we resolutely set about it, with the result that by nightfall we had it very satisfactorily inflated. Eb with his wonderful strength and stamina, was of invaluable aid.

Kepner and Willie returned fairly laden down with game of half a dozen different varieties, and several small animals which somewhat resembled the common American cotton-tail rabbit.

They, according to Kepner's account, had gone directly to the spring under "High Rock," and from there had penetrated the densely wooded section to the left and towards the lower portion of the island. They had found the vegetation to be quite variegated, and trees of mammoth size were frequently encountered. None of the larger four-footed denizens of the forest were met with, but there were many evidences of their existence, and we were glad to know about this, as being forewarned was to be forearmed.

Kepner and Willie fell eagerly in with our proposed plan of exploration via boat, and by dusk we had everything in readiness for an early start on the morrow.

Morning having duly arrived, we decided not to attempt to take all of our paraphernalia with us, so contented ourselves with only the lighter and most necessary articles, i. e., fresh water, guns, ammunition, fishing tackle, etc. We deemed it inadvisable to divide our party, so putting the balance of our effects, including our parachute envelope, safely within "Shale Rock Cavern," we rolled a large slab in front of its single entrance, and launched the canvas boat.

Our little sail was stepped; it responded to the brisk breeze which prevailed, and we were at last en route to the vicinity of "Steam Mountain."

Along the shore, and paralleling it, about a mile or so distant, we noticed a line of reefs, but between these and the shore, the water was free from obstructions; we remained within this enclosure or lagoon as long as it lasted, and by ten o'clock had progressed to within just a few miles of "Steam Mountain," its frowning heights rising almost inconceivably high and ever and always that pall of steam!

"Blue Ridge" had increased in height

as we advanced northward, and also with its increase in height, its sides became more and more precipitous, till finally the base proper of the peak itself reared sheer out of the sea to an elevation of fully three or four thousand feet.

We were about to round the point and would soon know our fate; yes, we were indeed upon an island, for, where we had hoped to see land, the wide expanse of the Pacific Ocean only met our view; the land had terminated quite abruptly, and we rounded the extreme northerly end of the island.

Myriads of gulls and cliff habitues fairly dotted the practically vertical sides of the base of "Steam Mountain." They were entirely unafraid at our approach; we did not disturb them, but proceeded on what we now knew to be the circumnavigation of the Island.

Towards one o'clock in the afternoon the wind had freshened considerably, and we hugged the shore more closely in search of shelter from its ever increasing persistence, when suddenly we came to a narrow rift in the rocky cliffs, which at this point were in the neighborhood of

five hundred feet in height. This cleft or vertical fissure was so narrow that it would have escaped our attention had we not been following the contour of the shore so closely; its sides were parallel from top to bottom, and only about fifty feet wide. It was much like a fissure in the rocky formation which in ages past, or by some upheaval had widened the original crevasse. It had the surface of the sea for its visible bottom; how far below its surface the cleft extended we, of course, had no way of determining.

As we advanced through its tortuous windings, we found that the storm was unable to reach us. On account of the terrific depth of the crevasse in proportion to its width, the darkness was quite manifest; however, there was sufficient light to enable us to proceed, though gropingly, and within another half hour we emerged into an inland sea.

This inland sea was probably not more than a mile wide at any point, and its shores (if they could be called such) were of the same character as the sides of the canyon through which we had just

passed, being merely wider apart, that was all.

As it was getting late in the afternoon we returned to the outside again, as the walls of the inland sea as well as those of the canyon did not seem to afford a foothold, much less accommodations for a camp.

We had noticed on glancing down along the shore of the island previous to having diverted our boat into the canyon, that at probably a distance of three miles or so, the precipitous nature of the cliffs was much less apparent, even promising facilities for landing, so recollecting this, we made that point our objective before night should overtake us.

On reaching the outside again, we found the sea still somewhat rough, but on the wane, and in a very short time we were able to beach the boat, and without any formalities other than a cold lunch, and the building of a roaring fire, we curled ourselves up in our respective blankets, and slept in the open.

In the morning we embarked with the rising of the sun, purposing to cover as great a distance as possible. The sea was

quite calm, only a slight swell giving evidence of the storm of yesterday. At about nine o'clock the shore dwindled down to an average of just a few feet above the sea, and so continued towards the lower end of the island as far as the eye could reach.

The immediate foreground now being unobstructed, we had a splendid view of the "Blue Ridge" in the distance, but we were then viewing it from the opposite side of the island. A good general view of the topography of the island was obtained from this point. From this low side of the island the land swelled gently in front of us, only to melt into the "Blue Ridge;" and to our left to meet the foothills, and finally the ramparts of "Steam Mountain." We could distinctly see "High Rock" projecting itself from the side of "Blue Ridge," and viewed at this distance, it was hard to realize that its little pin point was in reality more than an acre in extent.

Some ten or twelve miles further on, we came to the mouth of a considerable stream; its current was swift though silent, which indicated that it was deep.

The river promised more in the way of shelter than did the stretch of shore beyond, and as we had already made even greater progress than we had anticipated, we directed our boat up its enticing bosom.

At a distance of about half a mile, huge trees began to line its banks; being so large as to almost form an arch overhead. The current became more rapid as we advanced, and an occasional eddy, flurry, or even the suggestion of a ripple, warned us that its depth would probably diminish rapidly. Such proved to be the case, and after several portages, we abandoned the boat and proceeded on foot.

The farther up the stream we progressed, the shallower and more noisy became its waters; the fall now being probably four or five feet to the mile.

Kepner pleaded for an opportunity to try his luck as a fisherman, as the clear limpid waters, so diversified as to depth and direction of movement, looked to be an ideal spot for such a diversion; and besides, should he prove successful, Eb would quickly turn his trophies into good account.

Selecting an overhanging rock, beneath and about which the waters were in a hesitating mood, he cast his grasshopper bait in the very center of a deep pool, and presto! the bait was eagerly seized by a monstrously large brook trout which had fairly leaped to meet it, and along with him, half a dozen more which had caught sight of the bait from points of lesser advantage. Kepner's improvised rod was almost torn from his grasp, and then came a battle royal; the hook and line were very stout, and without a reel the combat was a short one, for the hook had been well taken, and in several minutes a four-pound speckled beauty laid palpitating on the mossy rocks. Kepner after some little difficulty in reclaiming his hook, cast in again with the same result, and in less than twenty minutes he had over a dozen to his credit.

Eb had built a fire at the base of an overhanging cliff some thirty feet above our present position; to get to the little shelf he had selected, it was necessary to climb up an incline of loose boulders which formed the mouth of a forty-five degree gully or ravine which had its

starting point at the top elevation of the ridge through which the river had cut its way at this point.

Eb had almost inadvertently picked out the very best sort of a place for our night's encampment. We had agreed that no matter how attractive a home we might be able to discover on this river, that it would nevertheless be too far into the interior to make it feasible; so we determined to return to our boat again in the morning, and carry out our primary object of circumnavigating the island.

As nightfall approached, we heard many evidences of animal life in our immediate vicinity, and we took the precaution to gather an ample supply of dry brush, and even a few small logs or fallen tree trunks, which Brown and Eb had tobogganed down the gully incline.

Our camp, as before stated, was at the base of an overhanging cliff, probably fifty feet high or even more; the shelf-like rock on which we were encamped extended horizontally towards the river, and then there was another drop of some thirty feet, so that the only place we could reach the gully, or inversely, the only

point of approach to our encampment, was at a single point where the shelf met the vertical of the cliff backing us.

Each of our party was armed with a rifle as well as an automatic, both of the most modern and approved pattern, but even at that, we did not relish the thought of an affray with unknown and unseen denizens of the forest; we considered discretion to be the better part of valor.

Our string of fires completely blocked us off from the gully or ravine side, and we hoped these fires would prove to be a sufficient deterrent to discourage any possible midnight marauders.

Out among the rocks and brush we now noticed an occasional flash from a pair of phosphorescent orbs, punctuated by a whine or whimper now and then, but for the time being that was all.

These uncertainties soon wrought havoc on our nerves, until Kepner, in a moment of exasperation, caught up a burning brand and hurled it far beyond the circle of the fire, at which there was a scampering up the gully, but in just a few minutes they were back again, even bolder than before.

Just then, near at hand there came a blood-curdling scream from the throat of a member of the panther family; he was apparently trying to bolster up his courage for some overt act, so Kepner decided to anticipate him, and fired a random shot. The scream was repeated, but this time it had a note of distress in it; however the experience seemed to have had a very salutary effect on the others as well, and there followed a period of comparative quiet for half an hour or so, but as before, only to be renewed with increasing aggressiveness.

We now knew that if we hoped to secure any rest at all, we would have to take the initiative ourselves, so we fired a concerted volley into the darkness, following it up with a shower of flying brands, and then each of us grasping a stray firebrand, we charged the darkness; this was apparently too much for them to stand with equanimity, and we were soon left to ourselves, and, we correctly judged, for the remainder of the night.

Bright and early the following morning we took our departure, returning to our boat, and proceeded down the river to

its mouth. We all heaved a sigh of relief in once again coming out into the open; we had but little appreciation for the experiences we were subjected to the preceding night.

We were again favored with splendid sailing weather, and a couple hours later found us off the extreme southernmost point of the island. Seaweed and marsh land were so closely intermeshed, that we had no means of determining just where the shore line existed; so making a wide detour we rounded the point and proceeded northward with "Shale Rock Cavern" as our objective.

The remainder of the voyage was uneventful, and we reached our destination at about five o'clock. We had circumnavigated "Steam Mountain Island." Now what?

## CHAPTER VI.

### More Mysteries.

That evening, while gathered about the fireplace, we became reminiscent in mood. "Is it not peculiar that there has not been a recurrence of the kitchen utensil episode?" inquired Kepner, speaking to everybody in general, but in reality looking to the Professor for the reply.

"My friends, has it occurred to any of you to associate that bizarre occurrence with the untoward southerly deflection of the 'America?'" This question left us nonplussed! Continuing the Professor exclaimed, "'Steam Mountain' holds a mystery we must solve if at all possible, and I for one suggest that we proceed to the inland sea as promising more intimate relationship with 'Steam Mountain' than any other part of the island."

We acted on this suggestion, and on the morrow once more abandoned "Shale

Rock Cavern" for the time being. We proceeded as before, and arrived once again within the inland sea. We rowed slowly around its almost circular perimeter, closely inspecting every square foot of its bleak, forbidding walls, when, rounding a very slight projection, there appeared a cleft in this otherwise uniformly unbroken surface; this cleft was only about ten feet in width, but fortunately for us did not extend down to the sea level, but rather to within fifteen or twenty feet of it. A tumble of rocky boulders led to it, as though the cliff had been gouged out with a mighty chisel, and the debris allowed to litter the place.

We fastened the boat to a boulder and climbed up like a lot of school boys on a frolic. The fissure was only about twenty feet deep, and as before stated about ten feet in width, but although a little crowded, it would afford splendid accommodations for the night at least.

As there was not a vestige of inflammable material anywhere to be seen, we delegated Kepner and Willie to take the boat back through the canyon to the sea shore in search of same.

They had been gone for about an hour, when suddenly, without a moment's warning, there reverberated throughout the inland sea a high, shrill, whistling sound, simply terrifying in its volume and intensity! The sound was continuous, but after the lapse of several moments we were conscious of a slight though almost imperceptible lowering of the pitch, and after the duration of probably a minute the lowering of the pitch was noticeably apparent.

We stood appalled at this new and perplexing mystery—what in the name of seven wonders could produce such volumes of sound outside of a gigantic steam whistle? The lowering of the pitch still continued, and with it, it lost a bit of its intensity, until the pitch became so extremely low that we could scarcely determine whether we were hearing or feeling it! Finally there was a blubbering or soughing, and absolute stillness again.

Kepner and Willie returned about half an hour later after a successful quest for dry wood; they had heard nothing whatever of the sounds which had created such

a panic among us, they having been on the outside at that time.

We resolved that we would not allow this new mystery to depress our spirits, and busied ourselves with our camping affairs as though nothing out of the ordinary had occurred; our indifference was a little forced I must admit.

We all embarked in the early morning and proceeded to complete our circumnavigation of the inland sea, when the Professor stayed our progress with a gesture of his hand. "Listen," said he. We strained every nerve, and then sure enough, there was a blubbering and soughing sound, the counterpart of the diminished tone of last night. We were as though glued to our seats, so intense was our concentration; the pitch was rising, scarcely perceptibly so, at least not like a sliding note; much slower than that, but nevertheless positively so.

This was no time for inaction, so the Professor shouted, "Forward. Straight across in the direction of 'Steam Mountain.'" We lay to on the oars, and by this time the pitch was free from its blubbering quality, and was more resonant.

As we continued to row, the pitch still had that higher tendency, till soon we were almost under that side of the wall adjacent to the "Steam Mountain," and there we discovered a small black opening at the water line, probably about a foot across, and only half as high. The whistling sound seemed to be emanating from this orifice.

It was almost deafening in intensity; we approached to within a boat's length of the aperture, and felt a rushing of the air towards this opening. Willie lost his cap, and in the twinkling of an eye it disappeared through the black rift.

During this interval, the pitch had continued on the ascending scale, but the opening was becoming continuously smaller. It was by this time but six inches across and about three inches in height. Finally after an interval of probably another minute, it gave vent to a piercing sound so high in pitch as to be almost beyond the range of hearing, and then ceased altogether; the opening had also disappeared!

"Friends," said the Professor at this juncture, "we have just witnessed a very

remarkable phenomenon; the tides, as they rise and lower, conceal or expose greater or less portions of the orifice we have just seen, and this in connection with a strong inward draft occasions the sounds we have heard. What causes the draft is not as clear as the phenomenon of the tides; let us return here later when the diminuendo will have started, and unless I am much mistaken, we will make a discovery of interest."

We completed the circumnavigation of the inland sea, and were returning in the direction of our cliff abode, when once again the whistling started exactly as it had done when we heard it for the first time. We were curious to see the maximum size of the aperture, and in due time, after having run through the entire gamut, there was exposed quite a large opening becoming larger every moment. Later on, when at its maximum, or in other words when the tide was at its lowest ebb, the cavity was fully fifteen feet across and approximately ten feet high.

The inrushing of air, though as strong as ever, was not so concentrated. Evidently any vibrations due to its inrushing

were so low in pitch as to be inaudible. We were compelled to keep rowing to resist being drawn into its cavernous depths.

As night was again approaching, we made our way across the sea to "Bivouac Ledge," unanimously purposing to continue our investigations on the morrow.

The rest of us had sought sleep, but the Professor stood there on the ledge facing "Steam Mountain" for many hours. I knew this to be true, for I had been sleeping for some time, and as I lazily rolled over, there was the Professor in exactly the same meditative position. How much longer he remained wrapped in his thoughts I do not know, for I slid off gently into the land of dreams and it was broad daylight when I awoke.

The Professor looked haggard and worn from his night's vigil, and we could see that his mind was still far away from his immediate surroundings.

We started for the whistling cave soon after breakfast, and in a few minutes were again in front of its cavernous mouth.

Kepner being an adept swimmer, had volunteered to swim into the opening, and

despite his protests, we took the precaution to tie the end of a long rope about his waist.

All having been put in readiness, he plunged fearlessly in and was soon lost to our sight in the mysterious darkness; not even the slightest sound of his swimming could we hear. We had previously arranged on a code of rope pulling signals; our suspense was soon over as we had received the signal indicating that everything was all right for us to enter with the boat.

We fastened the end of a remaining rope to a convenient projection, and then drifted swiftly in. Some fifty feet ahead of us, as revealed by our torches, was Kepner's head bobbing in the black waters. The cavern had suddenly widened out in all directions, and the light reflected from the walls revealed marvelously grotesque formations. Kepner had by this time climbed into the boat, and we added his line to our own, and thereby enlarged our scope.

To our right we noticed a ledge several feet high, beyond which was impenetrable darkness; we swerved the boat over to this

ledge and as luck would have it our rope was just sufficiently long to allow us to make a landing. We lifted the boat high up on the rocks, and renewing our torches followed this particular grotto. We had climbed over huge boulders, now up, now down, but more up than down, and as we advanced, the grade became fully twenty degrees or even more. We had followed a wall to our right for part of the way, but now found that we were in a comparatively narrow corridor, with walls on both sides, but the top or roof of indeterminate height. In the course of half an hour we judged that we had climbed to an elevation of approximately one hundred feet, and probably three times as far onward. At this point the incline ceased and became comparatively level, almost floor-like, in fact.

Radio, with his inexplicable sixth sense, was roaming about freely when we heard him barking in the distance. We hurried on in that direction, and came abruptly to a fissure through which the daylight was streaming. The barking was still on the other side, so worming our way through, we found Radio with his paws on a sort

of natural rocky balustrade, barking his delight at having been freed from the depressing gloom of the interior.

Our astonishment and delight knew no bounds, for we were on a sort of natural balcony overlooking the inland sea, about one hundred feet above its placid surface. At last we had found our permanent abode, and we straightway called it "Balcony Hall."

While there remained sufficient time, we returned to our boat and we were just in the "nick of time," as our exit would have been debarred had we delayed our return but a few minutes longer. To have sojourned within "Balcony Hall" all night would not have been entirely to our taste considering our very scant knowledge of its immediate environments.

Without going into too many details, I will state that the next day we all returned to "Shale Rock Cavern," secured the balance of our now meager effects, and bidding it a fond farewell, returned to "Bivouac Ledge."

We again sought "Balcony Hall," and were vastly pleased to discover on closer inspection that it revealed just those

features we could have most desired. The corridor stopped abruptly just beyond the opening to the balcony, and the opposite wall was intact, so that there was only one egress, and that was identical with our ingress, that is, down the incline to the boat landing in the grotto one hundred feet below. More than this, about half way down the incline, there was a cool stream of spring water welling up from beneath the tumble of rocks, and Willie had already hollowed and dammed it into a reservoir about a foot deep and several feet in diameter. Had it not been for this or a similar supply of fresh water, we could not have entertained the thought of abiding at "Balcony Hall," as the inland sea was salty as its parent the ocean.

While it gave us a fine sense of security to know that at stated times the only ingress to our chambers was barred by the tides, still even that condition might prove to be a serious inconvenience to us, so we built a ladder with wooden cross pieces and rope stays and this we dropped from the balcony to the sea below.

This occupation had kept us busy for the best part of three days, as we had but

the one boat, and the rungs had to be secured from down the beach. Our provisions were beginning to run low and we knew that it would be absolutely necessary to distribute our united efforts so as to properly take care of this important item; so Kepner and Willie, having already given evidence of their prowess in this direction, were delegated to the maintenance of our larder as a steady occupation.

One day Kepner caught sight of a goat high up on the scraggy sides of the mountain, and had brought him down a-tumbling; thereafter we found this source of food a very fertile one, though somewhat hazardous.

In due course of time, we had ascertained that the upper regions bordering our inland sea were comparatively level, and some three or four square miles in extent; also, we discovered that Puma River had its source in the foothills of "Steam Mountain," being fed by the glaciers on its snow-capped sides.

We had now been sojourning on the island for approximately three months,

and were nicely ensconced in our cozy quarters at "Balcony Hall."

We had pretty thoroughly explored the surface of the island, but how about those vast cavernous recesses which spread before us as revealed by the glimmer of torches from our boat landing? Surely there remained much to be accomplished.

## CHAPTER VII.

### The Advent of the Wizard.

One morning Brown, Kepner and Willie were grouped on the balcony ledge, when Brown (mark you, the silent mechanician) exclaimed, "Look! an airship!" pointing directly ahead, but considerably upward, and sure enough—there, plainly, distinctly, before our very eyes and not more than five hundred yards distant, was an airship, but even as we gazed at it, it rapidly diminished in size until it became a speck, and then vanished altogether! This all happened in less time than it has taken to tell it.

There was pandemonium on that balcony when the Professor and I reached the spot. All three of the eye witnesses were trying to impart the news at the same time. Three eye witnesses to the sight of an airship, seen at a range of five hundred yards, less than one minute pre-

viously, and still no airship in sight! In fact, having totally shriveled out of sight within ten seconds after having been first sighted by Brown.

"Gentlemen, you must be mistaken!" exclaimed the Professor, but they reiterated their account with still greater assurance, and the Professor turned silently back into "Balcony Hall," and we did not see him again for several hours.

I in turn questioned them, and Brown said, "Well, I ought to be able to tell an airship when I see it. In fact, it was of the monoplane tractor type and not an hallucination, either."

This discourse from our ordinarily silent mechanician went farther towards convincing me than could any thing else have done; but, whose airship was it? who could appear directly in front of us, and then disappear almost in the same instant? We were certainly a very mystified little group, but time would probably clear up the mystery.

One day the Professor appeared suddenly amongst us. "Gentlemen" (when he addressed us after this fashion, we knew that something of importance was

brewing). "Gentlemen, I move that we explore the grotto of 'Steam Mountain;' its cavernous depths may hold the secret of the mountain; at any rate that will be better than continuing to abide in this, to me, more than intolerable suspense."

The suggestion met with instant and enthusiastic approval, and under the guidance of the Professor, we at once began elaborate preparations, safeguarding ourselves in every respect, as such a venture was not to be entered into lightly.

There was the problem of light to be solved, lines to guide us on our return, and many other seemingly minor items, any one of which might prove a serious handicap should it be overlooked.

Kepner and Willie redoubled their efforts to secure provisions; Eb was set to the task of making a great supply of torches, and furthermore, we reclaimed the rope in our ladder, and at the same time unraveled an extra piece of heavy duck cloth, so that we had almost miles of stout cord when our task was done.

Preparatory to our more pretentious incursion, we made several trips inward for at least half a mile or more; the last

trip we made, we landed on a sort of projection from the face of a huge pile extending diagonally upward as far as the light from our torches would penetrate the darkness; how much farther it really extended we had no means of ascertaining short of making the climb.

We were about to return when we heard a sound as of rushing air; and climbing up the rock to a point some thirty feet higher, we were compelled to brace ourselves against a veritable gale which seemed to be striving to draw us up into a yawning cavity some fifty feet in diameter.

We hurriedly retraced our steps as best we could against such a gale, and in due course were again safe within "Balcony Hall."

"Friends, we have at last discovered what will ultimately lead to the revelation of the many mysteries which have confronted us since our sojourn on this island. I am in the dark as much as yourselves, but am fully convinced that our next move should be the complete exploration of the yawning aperture into which we gazed this afternoon."

Before doing anything else the Professor requested that the parachute envelope which had been abandoned at "Shale Rock Cavern" be brought to "Balcony Hall."

The Professor vouchsafed no explanation as to what he wished to do with the parachute envelope, which indicated that he was not as much in the dark as he claimed to be.

Brown and Kepner had volunteerd to get the parachute envelope, and so everything being in readiness, the entire party finally embarked at the boat landing and followed the cord leading into the darkness.

We rapidly traversed the distance, and in the course of half an hour we were once again beneath that yawning, wind-besieged fissure; its aspect was particularly forbidding, and the suction became more and more intensified as we neared it.

We finally made the start, the Professor leading, and Eb, with the parachute rolled into a compact bundle and strapped to his shoulders, brought up the rear.

The incline was somewhat rough in

places, and at times we had to help Radio, as he was apparently not built for such feats; however, we were progressing splendidly, and with as conservative use of our torches as conditions would permit.

The rush of air about our ears was continuous, and it gave us a sort of panicky instinct at first, but as time passed on, we became accustomed to this everlasting gale.

At times the bore or tunnel narrowed down to a lesser diameter, whereat the rush of air became almost violent; in fact we were being pushed up at a minimum expenditure of energy. Eb came dangerously near losing his precious bundle on several occasions; this was on account of its bulk, but he held on tenaciously nevertheless. There were numerous grottoes extending laterally all along the way, any one of which would have proven of interest, but we hurried on, following the main bore or wind-swept chambers—upward, ever upward.

After about an hour's strenuous effort we sought rest in a sort of pocket, away from the direct path of the bore, and

much to Eb's relief, for, strong as he was, the burden of the parachute was beginning to tell on him.

We had been progressing for the last hour at approximately an angle of forty-five degrees, and judged that we must have been fully one thousand feet above the sea level, and fully as far towards the center of "Steam Mountain."

After a short rest we made another start, and continued on for another two hours. By this time we were pretty well exhausted as a party, and finding another nook out of reach of the everlasting wind, we laid down to rest and to sleep if possible.

This awesome place was surely getting on my nerves, and I, for one, was on the point of backing out on several occasions; the thought of the distances we had already traversed, and the ground we would have to cover on our return, almost discouraged me.

The Professor, realizing the necessity of making as great progress as possible, gave the signal, and once more we trudged wearily up the seemingly endless incline.

We were now fully four thousand feet

above the level of the sea, and even more than that within the very heart of the mountain. When and how would all this end? was the thought which obsessed me, but seeing how patiently the others trudged on, I kept my peace.

After several more haltings, the Professor signified that we had all better partake of something to eat and gain as much sleep as possible; this halt he said would be for at least six hours. So exhausted were we that we almost fell to sleep the moment our heads rested on our pack.

I awoke with a start, and groping about for a match, lit my torch. The others were still sleeping soundly, with the exception of the Professor, who was sitting with his head between his hands, doubtless still in profound thought, which thinking I began to sincerely hope would lead us to somewhere or something—anything rather than this everlasting climb! climb! climb!

Suddenly, turning to me, the Professor said "Wake them up; we must move on again." It was with many a sleepy protest that all were brought back to the land of action again.

For the next couple hours there was but a repetition of that which had already passed, when we finally reached the top of the incline, and there directly in front of us was a solid wall of granite barring the path. There was no other outlet, except perhaps straight above; yes, there was the continuation of the bore, directly above us, a pin-hole of light came struggling down; yes, it was daylight, and it faintly lighted up the interior of this well-like place whose sides were as perpendicular as those of a well, even though about fifty feet apart.

The gale was still rushing, but it now led directly upward. How were we to proceed now?

The Professor, who had been gazing up this monstrous chimney-like bore, suddenly called to Eb to bring his parachute bundle, and Eb quickly complying came staggering forward with it.

"Friends," said the Professor, "you will now understand why I have been so persistent in having the parachute brought along; matters have turned out very much as I had anticipated; we will

have the parachute lift us out of this almost bottomless pit."

Eb, in his eagerness to assist, had already undone one of the retaining straps, which act allowed a very small section of the parachute to become inflated, and we came dangerously near losing both Eb and the parachute. "Not now!" exclaimed the Professor; "we must make our preparations very carefully, and in one of the alcoves away from the draft, or else we will lose the best friend we have."

Sturdy hands dragged the partially opened parachute back to a place of comparative calm. The Professor was very methodical and cautious in its unfolding, lest by some careless move we should lose it altogether, which, under the circumstances, would have been a very great calamity indeed.

A huge boulder weighing probably five or six hundred pounds was then rolled to a position as near the center of the vertical bore as we could estimate; a groove was hollowed out between this boulder and the loose rocky bottom of the cavern, and a stout rope was passed under it.

Then by degrees the parachute was allowed to come into the path of the air current, until we had it in position, but firmly anchored to the boulder in addition to our restraining hands.

First Radio was securely tied at the very apex of the sustaining ropes, and each had fixed himself a loop for the foot in his own particular stay rope, and all being in readiness, the Professor, with a final warning, severed the rope, and with a terrific jerk we were thrust rapidly upward through the vertical bore.

Up! up! up! we sped; its walls seemed to be rushing downwards, and the wind had ceased, for, we were now traveling with it.

After some minutes we were suddenly projected high into the air; the parachute at times getting out from the direct thrust of the column of air, and again, buoyed up still higher, much in the same capricious manner as a light pith ball is acted upon by a vertical jet of water. After we had been jostled about in this manner for some moments, the parachute then being on the ragged edge of the air fountain, tilted over and came danger-

ously near to capsizing us all; however, she righted herself again and we descended swiftly to the ground below.

We were in the crater of "Steam Mountain." The steam column was not a solid mass, as one would judge as viewed from the exterior, but there was a steam wall entirely surrounding the interior of the crater.

We had just untrammeled ourselves from the mass of ropes, and regained an upright position, when a resonant voice immediately back of us said, "Good morning, gentlemen; I have been expecting you!"

## CHAPTER VIII.

### The Wizard's Domain.

A thunderbolt from out of a clear sky could not have startled us more than the strange voice of a human being at this time and place. We stood there for a brief moment, too astounded to either speak or act, until, with a wonderful light dawning upon his countenance, Professor Turner advanced and grasped the welcoming, outstretched hand of the speaker, exclaiming, "Professor Waldinger!"

So this was the lost Professor, but it was a pretty hard question to decide at that particular moment as to whether we had discovered the lost Professor Waldinger, or whether he had found us, for, had he not in his first salutation said, "I have been expecting you"? But we were soon to learn more than our imaginations even had the temerity to conjure up.

Professor Turner having introduced the rest of us, our host invited us to his bungalow, which he smilingly assured us was only a quarter of a mile distant. A bungalow in this place! what could he mean? What was he doing here? Why living here? etc.

Although we were now in a comparatively open glade, we nevertheless could not see any great distance, because of the dense masses of tropical vegetation which completely surrounded us. There was plenty of light from above, but it was of a peculiarly diffused nature, the air was heavily laden with moisture, and we had the sensation of having just entered a huge hot-house or conservatory. There was no evidence of any breeze whatsoever; the humidity and silence were not oppressive, but rather restful after our strenuous and miraculous escape through the hollow core of "Steam Mountain."

"This way, gentlemen," we heard Professor Waldinger saying, and we followed him silently and with much awe.

We traversed the distance through a well defined and evidently much used path, and arrived upon a scene which beg-

gars description. Were we in full possession of our senses, or was this in truth another world? A more vivid and variegated assortment of colors could scarcely be imagined—great banks of flowers, intense in their solid, massy profusion, greeted the eyes in every direction; a gentle incline of vividly green, well kept grassy lawn spread itself directly in front of us. At the further extreme of this open space, nestling beneath wide spreading acacias, was the home of Professor Waldinger.

Our host was simply radiating hospitality. His welcoming smile had somewhat of exultation in it, but not a whit of condescension. Professor Turner was acting in a somewhat reserved, defensive manner, but without any visible trace of umbrage. His aforetime opponent certainly had the advantage now, but was being gracious enough not to abuse it.

Professor Waldinger was quite short of stature, but his physical handicap was more than counterbalanced by his tremendously strong personality. Virility and power dominated his every thought or act; his head was large for his dimin-

utive body, but exceedingly well formed. As for his eyes, they were effectually concealed behind a pair of large, heavily lensed glasses, through which he seemed to look into one's very soul. A truly remarkable man; a gigantic personality in a diminutive frame.

With a wave of the hand, and a welcoming bow, he bade us enter his home, and we filed up the steps to the veranda, much like a lot of diffident school boys, so insignificant did we feel in his presence.

Having excused himself, and bidding us to make ourselves at home, we sank into chair or hammock as the case might have been, and stared at each other blankly. With Professor Waldinger's departure there came a reaction, and at last all of our long suppressed emotions seemed to well up at once; but in the midst of this babel, Professor Turner cautioned, "Here comes Professor Waldinger," but if we were astounded at what we had seen thus far, what do you think could have been our impressions when Professor Waldinger advanced from the doorway holding the hand of a most marvelously

beautiful and winsome young woman, probably about twenty years of age. "Gentlemen, this is my daughter Bessie."

With a most charming and unconventional manner she shook hands with us in turn, welcoming us all heartily, and again sought the hand of her father.

We had, at our host's solicitation, sought seats again; Miss Bessie was snuggling contentedly by her father's side when our host, speaking more directly to Professor Turner, went on as follows:

"I have a confession to make, and trust that you will accept same as graciously as possible, which I admit will be asking much of you. I alone am responsible for your presence here on this island!"

There was some little commotion among us at this rather startling claim, which would naturally require considerable elaboration to substantiate, and we were still staring at him in astonishment, when he proceeded, still holding Professor Turner with his commanding eye. "Yes, I repeat it, I alone am responsible for your having lost the aviation contest, for I diverted the 'America' from her course, and forced it to land here within

my crater home. Your 'America' even now lies hard by. However, I confess that when it did arrive I expected to find you all safe within, and my disappointment in capturing the airship tenantless was very keen indeed.

"Naturally you ask by what right and by what means did I do this? As to the why, I will now explain, but as to the how, that will come later when I will have shown you through my laboratories.

"Professor Turner, you will please pardon my hasty and rather unceremonious advent from the meeting of the American Society of Scientific Research, some ten years ago, at which time I was honored to the extent of engaging in debate with you; I say I am sorry for the manner in which I left, but at the same time, if this was the only thing which would have aroused me to extraordinary effort towards vindication then I am glad the event occurred."

Professor Waldinger's manner, as before stated, was entirely devoid of any patronizing taint, but rather the magnanimity of a gracious victor towards the conquered.

"You will doubtless remember that my last words before so unceremoniously retiring were that I would yet demonstrate the truth of my theories. Well, Professor Turner, this I have done. It will be my peculiar pleasure to convince you of this in due time! For the present, I suppose that you and your party would be interested in knowing more about this marvelous 'Steam Mountain,' so we will devote the rest of the day to this, and reserve the shops and laboratories until later."

He sent his daughter on an errand, and shortly she returned with an armful of raincoats, sufficient for the entire party, including herself, and it was quite apparent that this last fact was of peculiar interest to Kepner, for it was he who helped Miss Bessie into her raincoat, and received therefor a very gracious "Thank you."

Professor Waldinger led us back the way we had come, and we shudderingly gave the yawning abyss of the wind-swept vertical bore or chimney a very wide berth, as it did not hold many pleasant memories for us.

Wending our way through dense, and in fact almost monstrous vegetation (which elicited from Professor Turner many a startled exclamation, as he would now and then recognize some rare species of flower or herb), Professor Waldinger led us onward for about half an hour, when we came abruptly to the base of a mound or hillock, probably about a hundred feet in height.

It was rather astonishing how incapable of physical effort Kepner seemed to view Miss Bessie; his anxious solicitations were laughingly accepted, but truth to tell, it was Kepner who more than once was in need of her assistance, rather than she, his.

Arriving at the top of this mound, we eagerly gazed around in every direction, and ever and always our gaze was met with a distant wall of steam. This mound seemed to be almost in the exact center of the crater, which Professor Waldinger advised us was just three and one quarter miles in diameter. Descending again, our host escorted us in a direction at right angles to that of our approach to the mound.

In the course of about half or three-quarters of an hour, we arrived in quite close proximity to the steam fringe on this side of the crater, and the noise of its escapement became louder every minute.

Our host now cautioned us to fasten our raincoats securely, as we were about to enter a narrow zone of continuous rainfall; continuous drizzle would have expressed it better.

There were hundreds of separate steam jets visible from this point; their separation could not have been more than probably fifty feet or so, but were so much at random, and covering a belt of probably two hundred yards, that from a distance would seem like just one continuous jet.

We wended our way in and out among these columns until we reached the exterior, and then there dawned upon our vision the island in all its entirety; there below us was the inland sea sunk into the plateau, looking very diminutive from this terrific height. The whole island was bathed in sunlight, and presented a marvelously beautiful scene.

We shortly retired again through the hot steam columns, when Professor

Waldinger stopped by the side of an iron pipe which projected from the ground to a height of several feet. Our host explained that this was only one of a series of similar installations which he had erected about two years previously. These pipes were capped with a steam gauge for recording pressure.

"I desired to know somewhat of the forces so intimately surrounding me, and it was my habit to take these readings about once a week, and, gentlemen, the steam pressure has been, and is, on the increase. The present reading being fully one pound more per square inch than it was this time last week. The trend is, and has always been on the increase, and the current readings are fully fifty pounds per square inch more than was the first reading two years or so ago. This pressure is accelerating, and if it continues to persist at this rate, it will only be a question of a few months at most, when the crater cap will be blown out like the cork of a champagne bottle."

## CHAPTER IX.

### We Become Better Acquainted.

We proceeded towards the Professor's bungalow, after having again passed through the envelope of heavy mist, which the Professor proclaimed to be the characteristic of the entire perimeter of steam surrounding the crater cap.

We had traversed about a quarter of a mile on our return trip, when Professor Waldinger calmly said, "Behold the America!" Yes, there it was, apparently in perfect condition, and still upright, We were glad to see it again, and I was particularly pleased to recover my property, but from Brown's manner there still remained a tinge of resentment.

We arrived at the bungalow at about dusk; the absence of shadows was a very peculiar and distinctive thing about this strange land; what light there still remained was so diffused by the steam en-

velope, as to make a shadow an impossibility.

As we entered the doorway, the place suddenly became effulgent with artificial light, emanating we knew not from where. The source was very manifestly not electrical, at least not directly so.

"How and where did you operate the switch controlling the lights?" asked Professor Turner. "I did not operate any switch, as there are none to operate; the mere proximity of our human dynamos so influences properly placed relays within the scope of a certain radius, and the lights are automatically set a-going thereby. As we leave this room, they will just as automatically extinguish themselves; but the contrivance, marvelous as it may seem to you, is as nothing compared to that which I still have in store for you! But, continued he, "first of all, we must have something to eat; we may be in what seems to you a veritable fairyland of science, but still eating remains a stern necessity."

As we entered the dining room, the place became illuminated in the same mysterious manner, and, glancing back, we

noted that the lights had become extinguished in the apartments we had just left.

"This beats carrying a lantern, doesn't it!" exclaimed Kepner. Miss Bessie smiled back at him a little condescendingly, and all at once Kepner felt a little awe creep over him; was this just an ordinary girl, or did she too possess the uncanny knowledge of her father?

The dinner consisted of many savory dishes, for the most part unfamiliar to us, but none the less appetizing because of that.

It was served by a big stalwart East Indian in a very silent and very dignified manner.

Our host explained that this servant was but one of half a dozen others, of the same nationality, upon whom he depended for all services rendered within the crater, including mechanics and engineers, in the furtherance of his elaborate experimentations. "They have proven faithful in every emergency and have held inviolate trusts reposed in them, so that even though I give them leave of absence

occasionally they have never divulged any of my secrets."

After dinner we retired to the library, which was literally walled with choice volumes, and the table was covered with all the current literature. I picked up a daily paper at random and found that it bore a date just one day back. It was a copy of the Chicago Enquirer!

I was so startled at this that I uttered an exclamation, calling Professor Turner's attention to the date; making no reply, he sank limply into a convenient chair. He was now apparently ready for almost anything.

While we had made no overtures to our host in regard to the date shown on the papers, he seemed to sense our wonderment, and so proceeded to explain that one of his men had gone to the United States for a paper and a few other minor articles just yesterday.

"But, Professor Waldinger," exclaimed Professor Turner, "such a statement is perfectly inexplicable to us. How can you serenely proceed to annihilate time and space in such a manner?"

"Perfectly simple," replied Professor

Waldinger; "he made the trip in my airship, which can travel at the rate of one thousand miles per hour. You will learn more about the propelling power I use after our visit to the laboratory. I will state, however, that it was through the instrumentality of this airship that I discovered 'Steam Mountain Crater.'

"When I approached 'Steam Mountain' for the first time, I, too, was of the opinion that the steam column was a solid mass clear through to its center, until I inadvertently passed through its envelope at an extreme height, when I observed that its center seemed to be less dense, and on spiralling down, discovered this crater, and made it my headquarters from that time on.

"Before taking you to the laboratories and shops, it might be well to mention a few things of common interest.

"I confess to you that I thought your party had been lost. When one evening about three or four days after the tenantless 'America' reached my domain, while I was carrying on some experiments, there suddenly crashed through the window and up against my Vibrometer, a

common kitchen fork, with a short piece of string trailing from it."

The professor walked over to a small cabinet and extracted therefrom the identical fork and string.

"I suppose you will all recognize this? At any rate, I knew that you must have suspicioned something, and thereafter I had to be exceedingly wary not to discover myself to you; I was not quite ready to do so in fact. Then on another occasion, some weeks later, just after I had embarked in my flying ship preparatory to a short run to Australia, several of your party discovered me from your retreat in the sea wall."

"Balcony Hall," corrected Kepner.

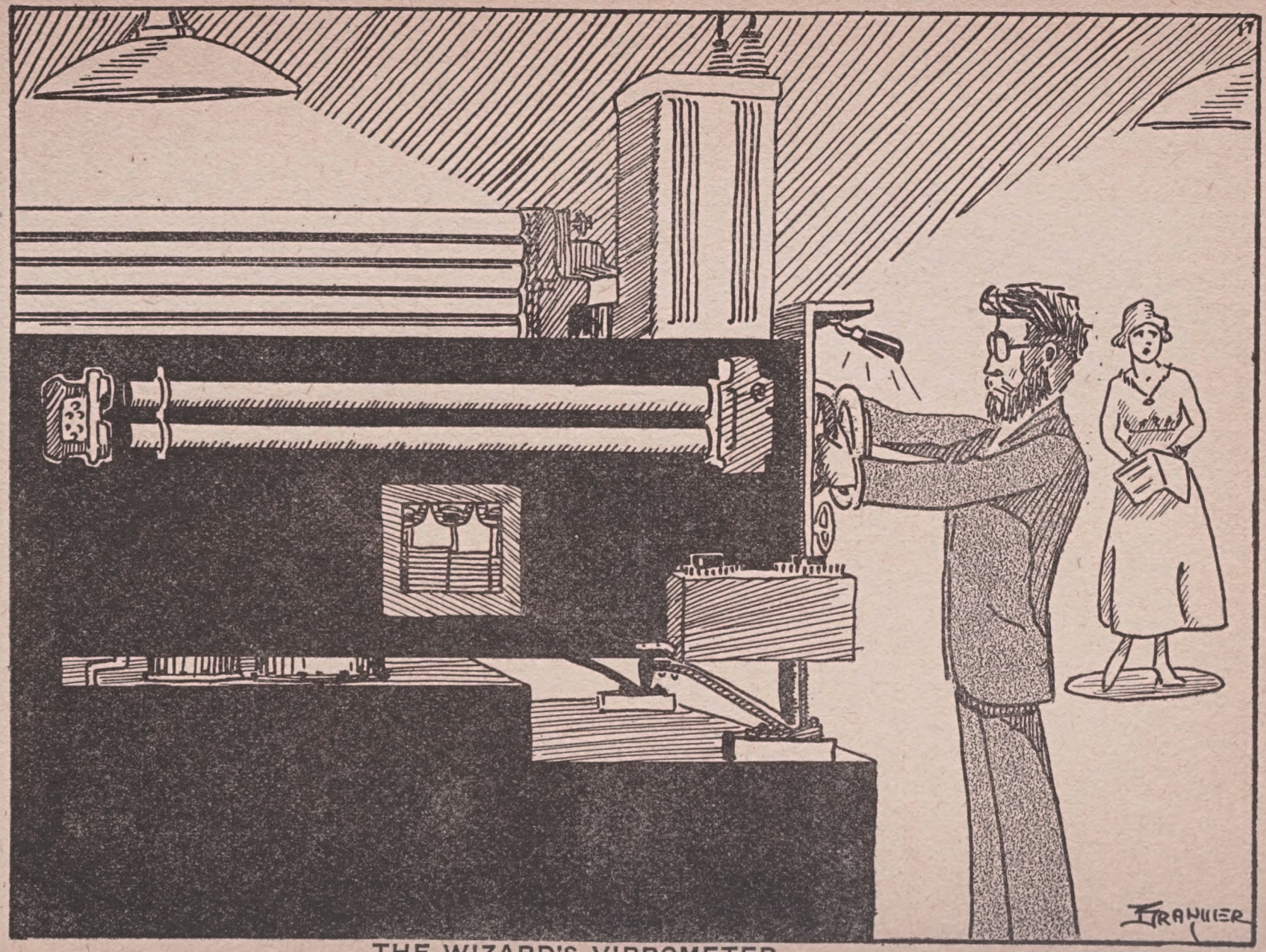
"Yes, from your 'Balcony Hall,' and I was compelled to resort to an optical illusion—to the trick of vanishing from your sight. I could not dematerialize—nothing which I have accomplished even verges on the supernatural—so I merely retreated in the direct line of your vision, which retreat having been so very rapid, and without the slightest lateral movement whatever, it must have seemed to

you as though but an hallucination of the mind."

"Yes, we pondered over that event much of our spare time, but without any satisfactory solution," acquiesced Professor Turner.

"As it is getting late I believe that it will be best to reserve our visit to the shops and laboratories until the morning," suggested Professor Waldinger.

We all bade our host and daughter good-night, and I am quite sure that Kepner bade Miss Bessie a couple of good-nights; however, that remark might be entirely gratuitous on my part. Anyhow, we were all comfortably lodged, and were soon sound asleep.




THE WIZARD'S VIBROMETER

## CHAPTER X.

### The Fairy Land of Science.

I awoke decisively—I cannot say suddenly, for that would scarcely convey my meaning. Just what outward cause had awakened me, I could not define, but nevertheless, I had the consciousness that someone, or something had awakened me, but could not attribute to any one of my five senses any degree of responsibility. It was a rather pleasureable experience at any rate.

I met Professor Turner in the hallway, and casually asked him what had awakened him. He could not define any more explicitly than I could, but was equally certain that an outside influence was responsible.

It was of little real moment, however, but our curiosity had been aroused, and after having ascertained that all the rest of the party had undergone similar ex-

periences, we determined to ask Professor Waldinger if he was the author; so, at the breakfast table, we broached the subject, and he told us in a matter-of-fact sort of way, that it was his habit to keep his vibrometer timed and tuned, to generate such a train, or trains of vibrations, as would stimulate all of the sleeper's senses simultaneously, but in a very *slight* degree only; the resultant stimulation, or co-ordination of the senses, being sufficient to awaken the sleeper without shock.

"I put you to sleep in the same manner, but the process was just the reverse, as I was then sending counteracting vibrations, the trend being from the conscious to the unconscious, and the process so gradual that you were not aware of the transition."

His refusal to go into any further details at that time, in connection with his offhand manner of treating this, as well as several other matters of truly remarkable accomplishment, only indicated that those things which he really considered worth the while, must of necessity be something truly stupendous!

Our host and hostess having arisen from the table, we did likewise, and Professor Waldinger announced that he proposed taking us through the shops first.

Kepner and Bessie had by this time become almost inseparable companions, and if her father noticed the trend of matters at least he never gave a sign.

The way to the shops led in a direction opposite to that which we had taken the previous day, and after a walk of about five minutes, we came upon a cluster, or more specifically, a triangle of one-story buildings, probably about three acres in extent. The center court contained a somewhat more pretentious building of greater height, and apparently constructed of glass throughout.

Our path paralleled the exterior of one of the lower buildings, until we reached its extreme end, or apex of the triangle, nearest the steam wall.

We entered the building, and upon being informed that it was the power house, were much bewildered at the lack of evidences of boilers and the like.

"You see, gentlemen, I have an inexhaustible supply of steam, secured from

natural sources." Plainly it was simply a question of tapping a steam geyser and piping same to the enormous engine which was practically the only piece of machinery in this half of the building. There was nothing astonishing about the engine itself, being simply one of the most efficient and approved types, such as could be seen in almost any well appointed manufacturing plant.

There was but one attendant in this room; he seemed but a duplication of the man servant we had already met; silent and grave, but with a very deferential manner towards his employer.

The engine, which we had just witnessed and passed, was not in operation at that time.

Beckoning us from a doorway leading into another compartment, we followed, and here, again, all was silence; it contained several electrical units of evidently tremendous capacity, but also inoperative at that time.

"What you have seen so far was merely my means to an end, and it has been several years since this plant has been operated."

We passed on to the machine shop, but here there were some evidences of activity; several workmen were busily engaged at as many different styles of machinery. The power was being supplied by a comparatively small electric plant.

"From now on, you will observe the products of the plant through which we have just passed, wherein I utilize a force of which I am the sole discoverer! We are about to pass through the building wherein are installed the apparatuses which are the sources of this power, but as they are noiseless in operation, enclosed, and very much alike when viewed from their exterior, I will now conduct you to the laboratory which contains the culmination of my achievements," (and turning to Professor Turner) "my vindication! Mark you, I reiterate, *my vindication!* It is here that I will demonstrate to you, my aforetime opponent, the absolute accuracy of the premises upon which my thesis was based on that regrettable occasion ten years ago."

Before our astonished eyes there appeared the most marvelously intricate

mechanism conceivable. It was monstrous in size, probably about two hundred feet in length, and twenty or twenty-five feet in width. Its height was variable, and its component parts of steel, brass, copper, aluminum and glass.

"Behold my Vibrometer! Gentlemen, with this instrument I can *generate* forces or completely *annul existing* ones; *augment* or *diminish any* of the forces which are interpreted by our five senses, and incidentally, a few other inferential ones! I can *interweave, differentiate, co-ordinate* or *completely counteract* vibrations of any source or nature *whatsoever!* I will shortly have you *see* a *sound; hear* a *color;* both *hear* and *see* an odor. Mix your senses as you will, by seemingly contradictory combinations of terms, and, being given vibrations, whether of air or ether, this machine, under my guidance, will progress through the entire gamut of commonly known vibrations (and a few others), whether the scale be an ascending or descending one; whether the thing required is harmony, dissonance, or complete obliteration. In other words my Vibrometer faithfully records and trans-

forms energy so as to bring it within the scope of any or all of our five senses. It maintains an absolute and mathematically correct record in those areas wherein the harp of our senses has certain strings missing, until by means of *difference* vibrations, and complex combinations of same, the resultant once more merges into the realm of our senses."

Bidding his daughter Bessie take her position on a brass plate about twenty feet from where we were then standing, he swung a lever into position, and Miss Bessie actually vanished from our view!

Kepner rushed frantically forward, but was detained by a commanding gesture from Professor Waldinger. "Wait! Would I harm my own daughter?" he said.

We gazed eagerly, and Kepner, somewhat despairingly, notwithstanding the reassuring words of her father, when, by degrees, her form and coloring were brought back to normal, and Miss Bessie smilingly stepped from the plate.

"That experiment was one of interference, or the nullification of the various colorings and shades reflected from the

person and attire of my daughter. By depressing the lever, I exactly counterbalanced the various rates of vibration incident to the reflection of colors, and the result was complete nullification."

Again Miss Bessie took her position on the brass plate, and at the request of her father, sang a familiar song. "Now, listen," he said, turning to us, simultaneously manipulating another lever. Presto! there was Miss Bessie apparently doing a pantomime; for, though her lips were moving as in song, not a suggestion of a sound emanated therefrom.

Slowly her father released the lever, and once again the melodious tones of her remarkably sweet voice reached us. "Listen again!" continued the Professor, and then by degrees, the little but pleasing voice of Miss Bessie slowly developed into the sonorous, resonant, vibrant power of an accomplished grand opera singer. Then her father augmented her voice to far beyond that of ordinary human power, the reverberating sounds completely encompassed us, and became clarion-like in their intensity. Then as her father gave this same lever a slight lateral twist, her

voice dropped an octave. We were listening to a tenor robusto. Still again he turned the lever, and another octave downward was the result. Could we believe the evidence of our senses? Was that beautiful, frail little woman producing such uncouth, rumbling sounds? No, we knew that the Vibrometer was responsible, and that her natural voice was but the relay or trigger; however, the effect was strangely incongruous. The Professor turned the lever still farther, and we could not hear a sound, except an occasional low rumble or growl as she reached her higher tones, then as her father shoved in the lever still farther, even these occasional tones escaped our ears, but we were jarred and shaken to our innermost depths. We were literally feeling her intensified song, but at the same time not hearing a sound!

"Now, gentlemen, attention again, please." He then manipulated the same lever in an inverse manner, and her voice was taken back through the entire gamut until once again she was singing after the fashion of her own charming self.

Grasping still another lever, the voice

rose in pitch by scarcely perceptible steps, rather than by leaps of an octave at a time; the pitch was becoming almost inconceivably high, our attempts at concentration being very trying, until finally we only heard a few of the lower notes as they manifested themselves intermittently; then, not a sound. Judging from the motion of her lips, Miss Bessie was, however, continuing her song.

"Now what?" exclaimed Professor Waldinger; "think you that I have lost control? Not a bit of it. We are now in a realm wherein there exists some of those missing human harp-strings I mentioned a while back. Please sit down at that table and place those phones on your ears." We did so, when we again heard Miss Bessie's voice over what duplicated the wireless telephone, but the pitch was getting higher again, when the Professor at the switch twisted his lever just a bit and we again heard as before; by the act of twisting the lever he had utilized the "ticker" principle, and we were again hearing what would otherwise have been inaudible.

After the repetition of the voice pass-

ing out of hearing, and subsequent restorations, Professor Waldinger cautioned us to put on some peculiar looking glasses, or goggles, which we did.

Continuing, the Professor said, "We have passed outside of the wireless realm and its phone interpretation, into the light area, and as we will have to pass through the infra-red on the way, it is a wise precaution to keep your glasses in place!"

Gradually, after having passed through the infra-red section, a dull red light with slight variations of shade seemed to pervade the entire laboratory. We were now *seeing* Miss Bessie's voice; soon the harmonics of her voice varied between a red and a yellow, passing thereafter into a shimmer of bewildering hues, scintillating, flashing, until the whole place was lit up with a glory indescribable. "Stop," suddenly shouted Professor Turner, "I cannot stand it!" With rapid transitions the descending scale was passed through, and finally, once again the real voice of the incomparable Miss Bessie.

"I could have taken you on through the realm of the sense of odor, a unique ex-

perience, I assure you, and on through the chemical end of the spectrum, and vastly further if it were not actually gruesome. Never again will I knowingly allow myself to invade that realm higher than the visible spectrum. I cannot adequately describe to you what I either sensed or thought. It was too terrifying for ordinary words to properly express; too intangible for ordinary vocabulary to convey. Had I not on that occasion released the lever at that point, I doubt whether I would now be in the land of the living; at any rate, I can at least affirm that occultism has at least a leg to stand on after all.

"Returning again to our present experiment; as I manipulated the ascending scale of Bessie's voice with the Vibrometer, I purposely eliminated the heat area as being too dangerous to invade; a slip of the intensity lever would have fused us in an instant.

"You doubtless have been mystified at the sliding entrance from air vibrations, or sound, into ether vibrations; well, all I can say at this time is, that I worked the lever, and the Vibrometer did the rest.

To explain in detail would require many days.

"Now, if you will accompany me to the drawing room of the bungalow, I will tell you how you happen to be here at my dictation, and will also be pleased to reiterate to Professor Turner the theories I promulgated on the occasion of the debate ten years ago, and today have verified by actual demonstration, as you will probably agree with me, after my talk will have taken you through this fairy-land of science, under the caption of the Dominant Ether or Matter and Movement, and their relationship to the ether of space."

## CHAPTER XI.

### The Vindication of Professor Waldinger.

We were all comfortably seated in a semicircle facing Professor Waldinger; there was an air of expectancy hovering about, and a feeling of diffidence pervading us, not even excepting Professor Turner.

Eb was at a remote end of the semicircle, and the whites of his eyes were shown in marked contrast to the gloom back of him.

Willie and Radio were curled up on the rug in front of me, Brown was seated at my left, and Professor Turner at my right.

Kepner and Miss Bessie finished the semicircle opposite to Eb, and incidentally semi-darkness also prevailed at that side of the arc, and neither Kepner nor Miss Bessie made complaint.

Professor Waldinger of course was in the center; and again I want to reiterate —what a man! The particular angle at which the light from above struck the thick and powerful lenses of his glasses made them seem as though opalescent; their extreme thickness and refractibility made it impossible for us to locate the pupil of his eye; I was conscious of endeavoring to find a trace of a shadow, or a point of comparative darkness within the perimeter of his glasses, but at such times as I might have imagined I had located it, and thereby gained an idea of the line of his vision, it would arbitrarily shift or disappear entirely, and again that awesome indefiniteness. I knew full well that it wasn't the glasses alone which thus overawed me, it was his wonderful personality.

Without any introductory remarks whatever, Professor Waldinger broached his subject. It was readily seen that this was a moment of keen appreciation by him; it was the climax of his ten years of voluntary retirement from society. It was to this end that he had striven; for

this purpose that he had given up the society of his fellow man.

"Gentlemen, mark well the title of my subject; this done, and you will not require further urging. The Dominant Ether, or Matter and Movement, and their relationship to the ether of space.

"Matter and Movement and the domination of both by the Omnipresent Ether of Space. You may ask, why do I give the attribute of omnipresence to the ether? Simply this, it is but another way of making acknowledgment that there are some things absolutely non-understandable by the human mind; unmeasureable by his devices. Omnipresent because its movement is so rapid, and its size so small that it is beyond the ability of the human mind to grasp. Dominant because of the mass such attributes give it.

"If we grant its size to be almost infinitely small, and its onward movement to be almost infinitely rapid, the time element is eliminated, and we then have the ether omnipresent or in more than one place at the same instant, which gives it the characteristics of a perfectly rigid solid, the hypothesis necessary

to account for the various phenomena in nature. Mark you, I do not say that it actually *is* in two places at once, but that as far as our minds are able to grasp such infinitely small measurements of time, it is. It is a phenomenon which, along with that of gravity, belongs to another and larger order of things, of which we cannot gain a conception any more than our finite minds can comprehend a fourth dimension.

"The ether, then, is a thing which we cannot even sense directly; but here is an opportune time for my definition of matter. Matter is merely *ether whose onward motion through space has become arrested.* Imagine if you will, far off in the void spaces beyond, two streams of ether moving in diametrically opposite directions; what a clash, what a pressure! those particles immediately concerned in the compress take up a rotary motion within this awesome area of pressure, affiliate with their neighbors which may happen to have a suitable orbital rate and amplitude of movement, ever and always being buffeted along in a path of least resistance within this huge compress,

whirled, jostled, always coerced, like a piece of driftwood in an eddy where two streams of water meet, until finally merging into the broad open stream flowing in but one direction, but being nevertheless dominated by that current!

"I maintain that in the course of transition through this ether compress, that matter may run the entire gamut of the so-called elementary substances. What it has developed into during such compress depends upon purely accidental combinations during the terrific contest for mastery on the part of these opposing streams of ether, which contest incidentally might after all be but some very trivial happening in that larger order of things to which our entire solar system may after all be but an atom, and our eternities of time, but a fraction of a second.

"We are warranted in making this comparison, for in the little realm wherein we find ourselves, we can delve into the minute, or reach out among the stars, each extreme being so far removed from the normal that we are lost in the wonder and marvel of it all. Time and space are really nothing in the abstract sense. A

microscope with a power of a few thousand diameters will people a seemingly clear drop of water with myriads of animalculae, whose entire span of life comes within our few minutes of research work. Think you that a second of their time is equivalent to a second of our time? Think you that these little microcosms could even imagine anything beyond their drop of water, much less be able to form a conception of the microscope peering at them—the eye behind it, the room, the building, city, universe, etc.?

"Just in this same proportion may our pitiful centuries of travailing be to a second of time in the existence of a being belonging to that larger order of things!

"Some day, centuries hence, when one of them will have had sufficient time to finish the adjustment of his microscope, we may hope to come into his knowledge of our very existence.

"Who knows but that the opposing streams of ether may not be defined as thought force on the part of the powers for Good and Evil; the resulting creation of matter and its subsequent evolution

being the interpretation of such thought conflict!

"Now, I have said that after having been jostled into mid-stream, this arrested ether, this newly created matter, was dominated by the stream into which it finally merged; such a particle might have been a neighbor at one time to another particle, which was being dominated by the opposing stream of ether, or might still be within the maelstrom, becoming more and more complex and intricate with the passing of time. At any rate, there is a point of preponderance of control pending the final merging into the area of absolute domination, and thereafter it is subservient to it at all times, and under all conditions which may pertain. This control or domination primarily consists in its having assumed a characteristic rotary movement such as will offer the least opposition to the free moving ether hurtling through it, the momentary passage of this free ether causing a disturbed equilibrium, which during the disturbance and the subsequent restoration to normal, causes transverse vibrations in the moving ether, which is the

*carrier* as well as the *source* of these transverse vibrations.

"Time goes on; suns, systems and worlds are formed, all of which are constantly amenable to this same domination of the ether.

"The fate of this created matter is to again dissipate, particle by particle; each electron, as it becomes less firmly combined with its neighbors than when under the original compress, is hurtled or dragged off, into and through space, taking up its march again as free ether; in other words because of this acquired motion and freedom from association, it ceases to *be* matter.

"The verification of such new obstacles put in the path of the ether, I have demonstrated by the actual workings of my Vibrometer, wherein I have co-related the senses, degraded the higher rates of vibration through a series of resultant or difference vibrations, re-combining, and so on octave after octave. My Vibrometer does this by taking cognizance of those transitions in the realm of periodicities wherein our senses fail us.

"Why, my dear Professor Turner,

have you found it necessary to assume an inter-atomic energy let loose in an explosive way in order to explain the various phenomena of nature, when in reality there is at hand an outside force which directs affairs during all changes of equilibrium? To my mind, the hypothesis of stored up energy within the atom is absurdly ridiculous, and is comparable to the wonderment depicted on a child's face at the spinning of his 'whirlygig,' the child being too young to associate its motion with that of the breeze coming from the nearby electric fan.

"A million calories to a gram of radium bromide during the process of its disassociation, and all this energy bound up within the salt itself?—surely you could not have been serious in such a belief. Why should you strive to give to the atom greater qualities than its parent, the ether? Why have striven to invent a jelly-like ether with properties impossible for the mind to grasp, and equally unsatisfactory as a working hypothesis as well?

"I have discovered a substance which under electrical control will temporarily

interpose itself as an obstacle to the free passage of the ether, and to such a degree as to exceed the force of gravity itself. This excess of energy over and above the nullification of the force of gravity, I utilize to operate my airship, with which I can travel at the amazing rate of one thousand miles per hour! I can go, and in fact have gone, many hundreds of times completely around the world in twenty-four hours. It was through this means of access to the outside world that I learned of your proposed trip in the 'America,' and knew that the time for my complete vindication had at last arrived.

"Through the instrumentality of my Vibrometer, I deflected the course of the 'America' and nullified your wireless signals, both outgoing and incoming. The light you see above us emanates from a very minute particle of this same substance whose resistance to the passage of the ether under electrical control is so great as to heat it to incandecence.

"Our earth is a mere microcosm in comparison to the cosmos, a grain of sand on the seashore. In the vortex where

the worlds are born by contending streams of ether, newly created matter (arrested ether) runs the entire gamut of the so-called elementary substances, from the simplest to the most complex forms, and as it eddies into mid-stream in one or the other of the free ether currents, is dominated and maintained by that stream, and in the course of time or circumstance, as the stress has become lessened and equilibriums altered, the more complex forms of matter, such as salts of radium, lose an occasional particle, readjust themselves to the new and lessened aggregation, thereby acquiring a new characteristic motion among its remaining particles, and so on through the descending scale back to the simplest element again, and ultimately to nothingness; the lost particles having in their turn taken up their march with the eternal ether again, and so on until all matter will have been disassociated and absorbed back into its parent the dominant ether stream.

"The creation of the electric current through the medium of the electric generator, I have found to be merely a periodic

opposition to the free passage of the dominant ether. The prime requisite we know to be that of changeability from a magnetized state back to a state of demagnetization; in other words, when magnetized, the armature opposes the free passage of the ether, and when demagnetized, comes back to normal again, and like all other forms of matter, with a minimum of resistance to its passage.

"The characteristic periodicity of copper is such as to convey and preserve the impulses occasioned by the conflict between the dominant ether and the temporarily obtrusive armature. This ability to pass the energy along to point of usability constitutes a good electrical conductor, while insulators fail almost completely as current carriers.

"The dominant ether takes cognizance of every change of equilibrium, and dictates the new order of things. For instance, in the phenomenon of crystallization, according to my premises, sulphate of iron is sulphate of iron and not sulphate of copper, merely because its characteristic is different; the same order or nature of ultimate particles go to make

up both, but their number per unit, their relations to each other, their rate and amplitude of motion, and what not, all serve to give them their own characteristics or individualities.

"In the phenomenon of crystallization there takes place a change from the liquid to the solid state; the dominant ether prescribes what the solid form shall be, which form, with all of its symmetry of definite geometrical figures bounded by flat surfaces, to my mind is nothing more than a mathematical expression of the characteristic motion of sulphate of iron, to that of the dominant ether itself.

"Transverse motions of the various forces accompanying the phenomenon of radio-activity, even though their speed approaches that of light, is, in reality, but a snail's pace as compared to the twentieth century limited; they pale into mere insignificance by contrast.

"Oh, the mutability of things. This incomparable frolic and dance of the atoms; whether they be in the bauble of the court jester, or in the crown of his king, it matters not, the little dervishes whirl on."

The Professor had finished his discourse, and promising us a trip on his airship on the morrow, we all sought our separate apartments.

## CHAPTER XII.

### The Crater Cork Blows Out.

The following day we were awakened with the same pleasurable experience as on the preceding morning, and were looking forward to the promised jaunt in the Professor's airship, which, by the way, he called the "Electron."

The "Electron" was not the airship in which he made his almost daily trips, but was a vastly larger one, built to carry heavy and bulky articles of such a nature as could not be produced in his island domain.

The "Electron" was wheeled from its hangar by several husky attendants. Its outward appearance was that of a huge crystal ball, fully twenty feet in diameter, its glass walls were all of two inches in thickness, and capable of withstanding enormous pressures. It was ribbed with two great circles, which divided the sphere into eight sections; the ribs or bands being where the glass sections were joined and hermetically sealed.

The controlling device was in the upper half of the sphere, and was supported by an aluminum trestle.

We all entered by the single trap door, and it required no little coaxing to induce Radio to enter. Once inside, the Professor closed the trap door, carefully adjusting several screws, and then bidding us to be seated on the circular bench girdling the sphere at an elevation of about two feet above the central depression, he mounted the trestle to the top of the sphere, Professor Turner accompanying him.

"All ready? We are about to start," hailed Professor Waldinger, and then, without a jolt or a jar, or an appreciable change of our equilibrium, at precisely ten o'clock A. M., our car shot up, straight up, at a tremendous speed. With one accord (save Miss Bessie, of course) we involuntarily uttered cries of dismay, and even terror, for, what was to keep us from falling? the clear transparency of the glass walls did not obstruct our view in the slightest degree, and we simply could not realize that it would afford a support for our footing. It was as

though we were soaring miles high, sitting on a circular bench with nothing to hold to.

I experienced a peculiar nauseating feeling at first, but soon became accustomed to the novel situation. Far, far below us, probably fifty or a hundred miles, was old mother earth, slowly, ponderously revolving!

The Professor explained that the instant he turned on the power, we were left in the *path* of the earth, because, through the application of his mysterious power, we had become differentiated from all other forms of matter on the earth; an independent entity, so to speak, for the time being. We were now catching up to the earth once more, the Professor having turned off his mysterious force; he now turned on the power again, but only slightly, until his mysterious force and that of the attractive force of gravity exactly counterbalanced each other, and as a consequence, we neither caught up to, nor were left further in the rear; we were *following* the earth in its yearly orbit about the sun, while the earth was revolving below us with math-

ematical precision. This condition gave us the sensation of traveling around the earth, whereas, in reality, it was furnishing us a panoramic view at the rate of one thousand miles per hour.

We realized that the sea had passed beneath us during our higher flight, and we were sailing over dry land, or rather the dry land was slipping rapidly to the eastward. We judged this land to be that of Australia.

"We will now pursue a diagonally northwestward course," called out Professor Waldinger, "so that we may pass over, or rather, so that we may review the passing of the northern hemisphere."

It is futile for me to endeavor to convey my impressions, as the marvel of it all was beyond words to adequately express; suffice to say, that in just about twenty-six hours, we again landed in the exact spot from where we had started. It was noon the following day, and as we were all in need of sleep, having just passed a period of continuous daylight, we sought our respective couches.

The entire party had been so entranced with our experiences in the "Electron"

that thereafter an excursion was of almost daily occurrence. However, Professor Waldinger did not accompany us, but delegated his daughter to act as pilot, and she proved herself to be quite adept in its manipulation. Not for an instant would either she or her father allow its control to be vested in other hands than their own; not even Kepner with all his persuasiveness could induce Miss Bessie to relinquish her post in his favor, and as for any of the rest of us making such a request of Professor Waldinger, it was never even dreamed of.

This particular morning, the Professor, in returning from a solitary visit to some portion of the crater, wore an anxious, perplexed expression; he started to speak on several occasions, but seemingly on after thought held his peace.

The Professors had by this time become fast friends; the rancour of their experiences ten years previously evidently having been entirely forgotten. They spent most of their time in the laboratory, which left the rest of us to our own devices, and as before stated, the "Electron" became very popular.

We had visited almost every country on the globe; had hovered exactly over both the north and south poles, dipped into the sea to depths heretofore unexplored, and in fact had poked into almost every nook and cranny, and still sighed for new sensations.

On one occasion we were gone so long that the Professor had become very much worried about the safety of his daughter and party. It happened in this manner:

At our unanimous solicitations Miss Bessie was induced to allow the earth to move much farther away than had been her practice. In fact on this occasion we had almost gotten outside of the domination of the earth into that of the moon, and it was problematical for a few minutes as to whether the "Electron" would hold her allegiance to the earth, or fickly surrender it to the moon. These two forces being practically in equilibrium occasioned many grotesque experiences within the "Electron," as we had no sense of weight whatever; there was no distinction as to whether a thing was upside down, or down side up; it was all the same to us. However, through the clever

manipulations and perserverance of Miss Bessie, we finally merged fully and positively back into the gravitational control of mother earth. It was a narrow escape, and thereafter we were content with soarings within a few miles of the earth at most.

We pointed the "Electron" homeward, along towards two o'clock in the afternoon, maintaining an altitude of approximately fifteen miles, when Miss Bessie uttered a but half-suppressed scream of terror; she had been making straight for the steam column, but had noticed that its appearance was far from normal; great clouds of steam were seething upward, and on entering its embrace, we could not discern the customary transparency at its center as we were wont to do. Often we had descended down this hollow shaft of steam to the crater below, but now it was a furiously whirling, turbulent mass, devoid of anything like its accustomed symmetrical funnel shape, and in a flash we realized what Miss Bessie had already discerned—*the crater cork had blown out!*

## CHAPTER XIII.

### The Burial of the Electron.

It was with the utmost presence of mind and an astonishing amount of grit that Miss Bessie retained control of the "Electron." " 'Shale Rock Cavern,' make for that," exclaimed Kepner, and silently, but unerringly, our brave little pilot nestled the "Electron" just outside the doorway of our long abandoned retreat, and promptly fainted.

Eager and sympathetic hands assisted Kepner to remove our lady pilot down the trestle, and placing her gently on a pile of rugs in the bottom of the car, we devoted ourselves to restore her to consciousness, and with eventual success. She sat upright with a terrified light in her eyes, "My father, my poor dear father. I shall never see him again."

Indeed it was but too true; as Professor Waldinger had foretold, the steam pressure had become so excessive as to force

out the crater plug, his home, his domain, miles high into the air.

From the interior of the "Electron" we could see evidences of the crater debris scattered about; Brown almost tearfully pointed to an object some fifty feet away. It was the steering wheel of the "America."

By this time Miss Bessie was in tears, the reaction had come, and we did all we could to comfort her because of her grievous loss.

Our own dear Professor Turner, he too was lost to us, and sadly we held council, still within the crystal sphere.

Miss Bessie desired above all things to get away from the island and its vicinity, so we unanimously decided to make for our own dear home-land without delay. With Miss Bessie again at the wheel, we rose slowly, almost funereally, above the island. "High Rock" looked like a mere stepping stone from our great altitude, and the inland sea with its well-like walls, and all, slowly disappeared from our sight, till finally the only visible evidence of the island was the familiar steam pall! In a few minutes that too disappeared

from our sight, and "Steam Mountain" island became but a memory.

Miss Bessie landed the "Electron" upon a gravel beach in an unfrequented spot but a few miles from the outskirts of San Diego, California, and we disembarked.

We were much distressed to note the strain Miss Bessie was undergoing; the fact that she alone could operate the "Electron" had given her no chance to relax, and at the same time gave us no opportunity to be of assistance to her.

A firm resolve seemed to have taken possession of her almost the same instant of landing. "My friends," said she, "the 'Electron' but serves to remind me of my recent bereavement, and it is my purpose to set it adrift. I wish to have nothing to remind me of the loss of my dear father."

So without further ado, she stepped alone into the interior of the "Electron," attached a stout cord to the starting lever, brought the other end down through the open door, and taking a position some twenty feet away, pulled the string. Slowly, majestically, rose the "Electron" straight up, its speed accelerating as it

progressed. Up, up, until finally lost to our gaze. She had buried the "Electron" in the fathomless abyss of the eternal ether, and, for all I know, the "Electron" is still pursuing its solitary flight through space!

There is little else to relate, save that we sought shelter in the home of an acquaintance of mine, living in San Diego, and we were much relieved to witness Miss Bessie sobbing herself to sleep on the sympathetic bosom of my friend's wife.

Within a few days thereafter, we got into radioscope communication with the editor of the Chicago Enquirer and, owing to the courtesy of the American Society of Scientific Research, we are here with you tonight.

Some of you may wish to know if Kepner and Miss Bessie were married in the interim; well, as to that, since they are both present, you may ask them yourselves, and I can assure you that they will not consider the question a personal one.

In those portions of my talk wherein I attempted to repeat the words of Professor Waldinger's memorable discourse on

Matter and Motion and their relationship to the Dominant Ether, I trust that you will take into consideration the fact that I make no pretensions as a physicist, but rather have merely attempted in my feeble way to recall his sayings as they had impressed me.

Thanking you for the patience accorded my rather lengthy account of our experiences, I bid you a kindly good-night.

THE END

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